

## **GRAFTE TE TINKAS:**

**"Hier ruht der Unteroffizier Robert Kirchgatter. gestorben am 27 Juni 1895"**

**"Hier ruht der Reiter Ferdinand Zarp. Gestorben am 26. Juni 1895"**

These two young German soldiers had been stationed at Tinkas along the Bai-Weg ox-wagon road, a few km east of Blutkuppe.

Other stations along the way were Goanikontes, Haigamkhab, Husab, Langer Heinrich, Tinkas, Tsaobis, Wilhelmsfeste, Otjimbingwe.

**Both men had died of malaria, just one day apart. So far we could not establish if they were the only men stationed there at the time.**

It is also very unlikely that they contracted malaria at Tinkas.

During 1895 Namibia was stricken in a severe drought, the Rinderpest epidemic was rapidly wiping out livestock throughout southern Africa.

Local pastoralists, settler farmers but also ox-wagon transport riders were severely affected by the cattle disease. It is estimated that up to 90% of cattle stocks in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa succumbed to the Rinderpest.

Swakopmund was still a makeshift frontier village on a forbidding, uninviting desert coast, consisting basically of a few shacks and tents scattered in the sand, and flapping, rattling in the wind along an entirely unsheltered open shore. Construction of the Mole harbor basin had not even started.

Later in the same year, and only due to these compelling circumstances, Berlin decided on a budget to build a narrow-gauge railway line from Swakopmund to Windhoek. Surveying and construction commenced in 1896, and the railway line of 380 km was completed and fully operational by August 1902.

Steam locomotives were fairly independent of grazing, yet every bag of coal to fire the engines had to be imported from the mines in the Ruhrgebiet in Germany and shipped from Hamburg to Swakopmund.

Once construction of the railway line started, and the rail head was slowly advancing through the desert, penetrating the hinterland, the old ox-wagon route abruptly lost all significance.

Here's a link to a register of fallen, deceased, missing-in-action soldiers and (probable) causes of death

<https://www.kult-sammlung-stammeskunst.de/rehoboth/museum/gefallenenliste/>

**.Bron:** George Erb, Swakop Tour Company