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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT  
OF THE PROPOSED MTN MAST AT THE FARM  
ELANDSDRAAI 88, NEAR ORANGE RIVER STATION,  
HOPETOWN DISTRICT, NORTHERN CAPE**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The MTN Cellular Service is planning a new cell phone mast at the farm Elandsdraai, near Orange River Station in the Hopetown district, Northern Cape.

Archaeological material occurred in the form of a small collection of stone flakes on the surface. The flakes are heavily patinated and artefacts display no scars or secondary trimming. The lithic assemblage is relatively small and seems to be a general distribution in the area.

The impact on the stone flake distribution is considered to be of minor significance.

A concentration of tin can remains of food and milk containers characteristic of British military rations of Anglo-Boer War origin (1899-1902) were found at the foot of the hill. No other material such as cartridge shells or other war remnants could be found to add more information.

The presence of food containers at the site is considered as of minor significance and the erection of the MTN mast on the hill will have no impact on the Anglo-Boer War remains.

I recommend that the planning and erection of the mast on the hill and the building of the access road could proceed.

## INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION

### INVESTIGATION

The proposed MTN mast will be placed on the farm Elandsdraai 88, near Orange River Station, in the Hopetown district, Northern Cape Province. The site was visited on 26 May 2008. Christine Fouché from Enviroworks Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, involved me in the project and Wikus Potgieter from MTN accompanied me to the site.

The area was examined for possible archaeological and historical material and to establish the potential impact on any cultural material that might be found. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the Environmental Conservation Act, (73 of 1989).

### LOCALITY

The site for the planned erection of the MTN mast is located on the farm Elandsdraai 88, Hopetown district, Northern Cape Province (Map 1). The site is reached along the R369 road to Orania and Petrusville (Map 2).

The whole area consists of Upper Karoo vegetation (Fig.).

The following GPS coordinates (Cape scale) were taken:

<b>ELANDSDRAAI</b>	29°39'56"S 024°15'36"E	Altitude 1133m (Figs.).
<b>MAST SITE</b>	29°15'54"S 024°15'47"E	Altitude 1175m (Figs.).
<b>MIDDEN</b>	29°39'56"S 024°15'36"E	Altitude 1136m (Fig.).
<b>▲ OR-TS 18</b>	29°39'53"S 024°15'47"E	Altitude 1177m (Figs.).

## RESULTS

### FINDS

A relatively small scatter of tin cans was discovered on the surface at the foot of the hill. The tins are clearly the remains of food containers and judging from the thick soldering visible on the cans, the finds are clearly identifiable as part of the rations supplied to the British forces during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).

The concentration of finds at the foot of the hill could indicate that a British patrol bivouacked on the farm. Several other important battlefield sites in the region such as Belmont (23 November 1899), Fabersput (30 May 1900) and Sunnyside (1 January 1900) and the well-known concentration camp at Orange River Station, emphasise the importance of the Anglo-Boer War sites in the area (Map 3).

The concentration contained a variety of metal tin food and milk cans (Figs.). No glass or porcelain or cartridge cases were found, however.

Archaeological material occurred in the form of a small collection of stone flakes on the surface (Fig.10). The flakes are heavily patinated and artefacts display no scars or secondary trimming. Flakes are unutilised and cannot be described as "tools".

Some of the splinters resemble points with convergent edges and single or multiple flaking on the dorsal surface. Percussion bulbs are clearly recognisable in some cases and prepared platforms are plane and narrow.

The sample is relatively small and it is difficult to classify the cultural material through the application of the standard tool typology and basic characteristics.

No other historical or cultural remains were found.

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The lithic assemblage seems to be a general distribution of unutilised flakes. The impact on the cultural heritage remains on the proposed sites at Elandsdraai will be of minor significance.

The specific site on the hill produces Anglo-Boer War material at the foot of the hill only. Nothing was found on the hill where the actual developments are planned. Information gathered from published sources and from discussions with Johan Loock, Anglo-Boer War expert from Bloemfontein, indicated other activities near the hill (Map 3).

These finds together with other important battlefield sites at Belmont, Fabersput and Sunnyside and the concentration camp at Orange River Station, emphasise the probability and significance of other Anglo-Boer War sites in the area.

It is important to keep in mind that every archaeological and historical site is unique and should be treated as a non-renewable commodity. All efforts should be made to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or destruction of the features or the environment.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

I accept that due to the absence of any cultural material on top of the hill, the erection of a cell phone mast will have a minor impact on the history and cultural remains in the area.

No obvious reasons could be found to delay further planning and development of the site. It is recommended that the proposed developments at the selected sites may proceed.

## **MITIGATION**

Concerning the area for the proposed developments at Elandsdraai 88, mitigation measures will not be required.

It is stressed, however, that in case of the discovery of any historical remnants in the form of human skeletal remains, metal objects, tin food cans, glass and porcelain, cartridge cases, pipe stems, metal buttons, and other cultural material during the course of the work, all activities should temporarily be stopped for inspection. The archaeologist should be notified immediately for an investigation and inspection by other Anglo-Boer War specialists.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank Christine Fouché from Enviroworks Environmental Consultants, Bloemfontein, for involving me in the project and Wikus Potgieter from MTN who accompanied me to the site.

I also owe gratitude to Johan Loock from Bloemfontein, for information on the Anglo-Boer War activities around Hopetown in general and the Orange River Station area in particular.

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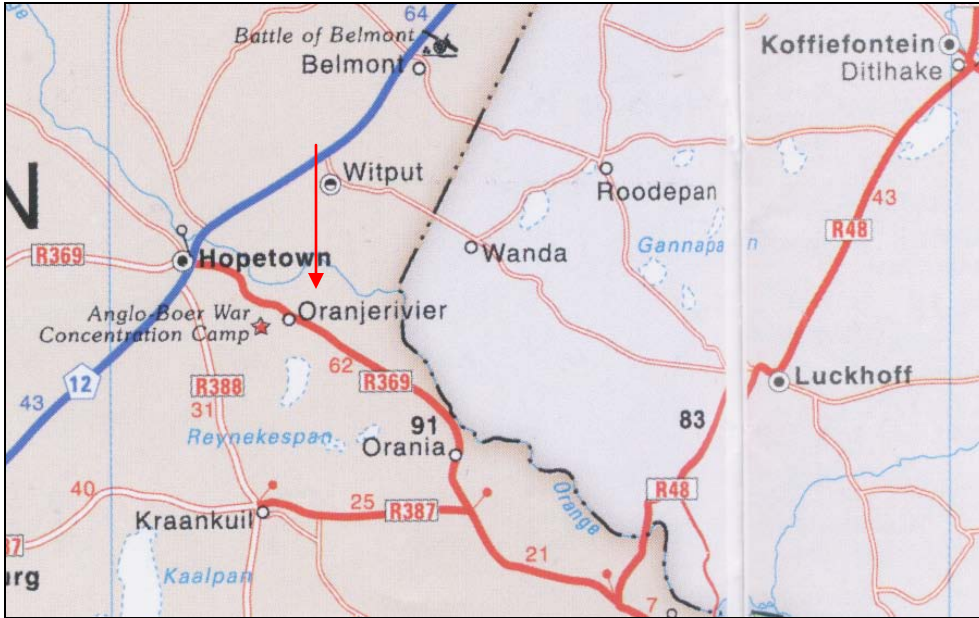
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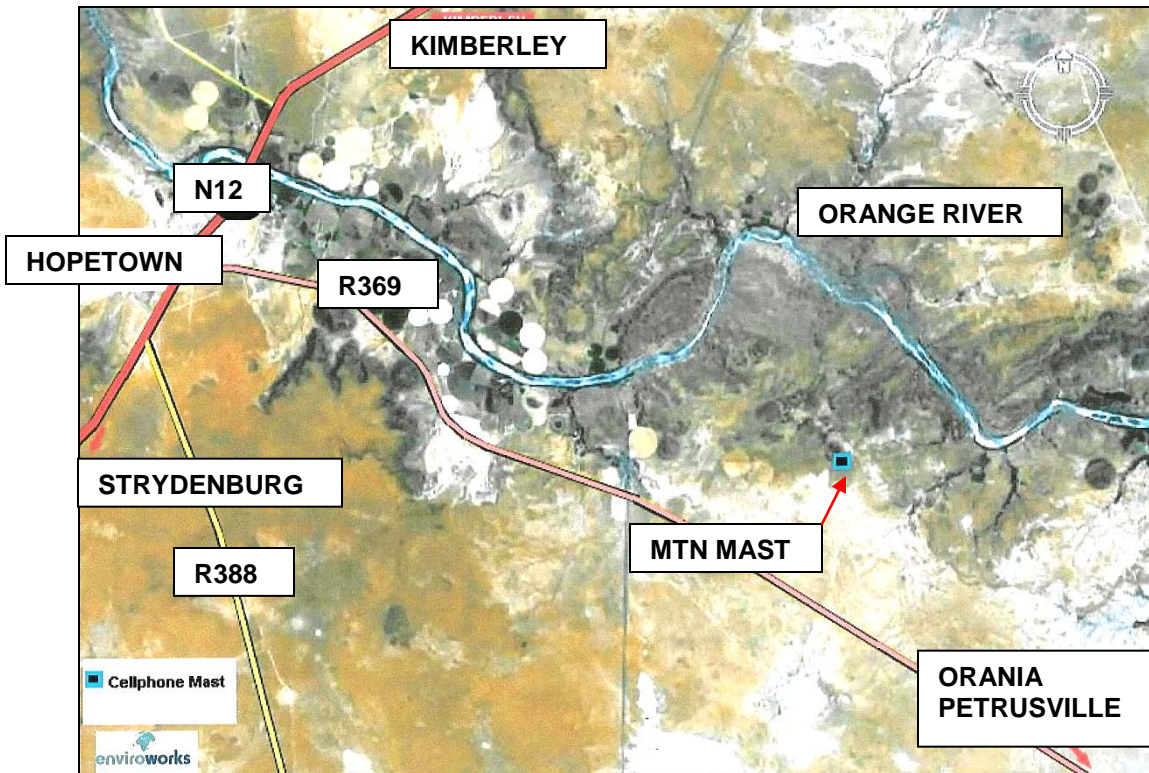
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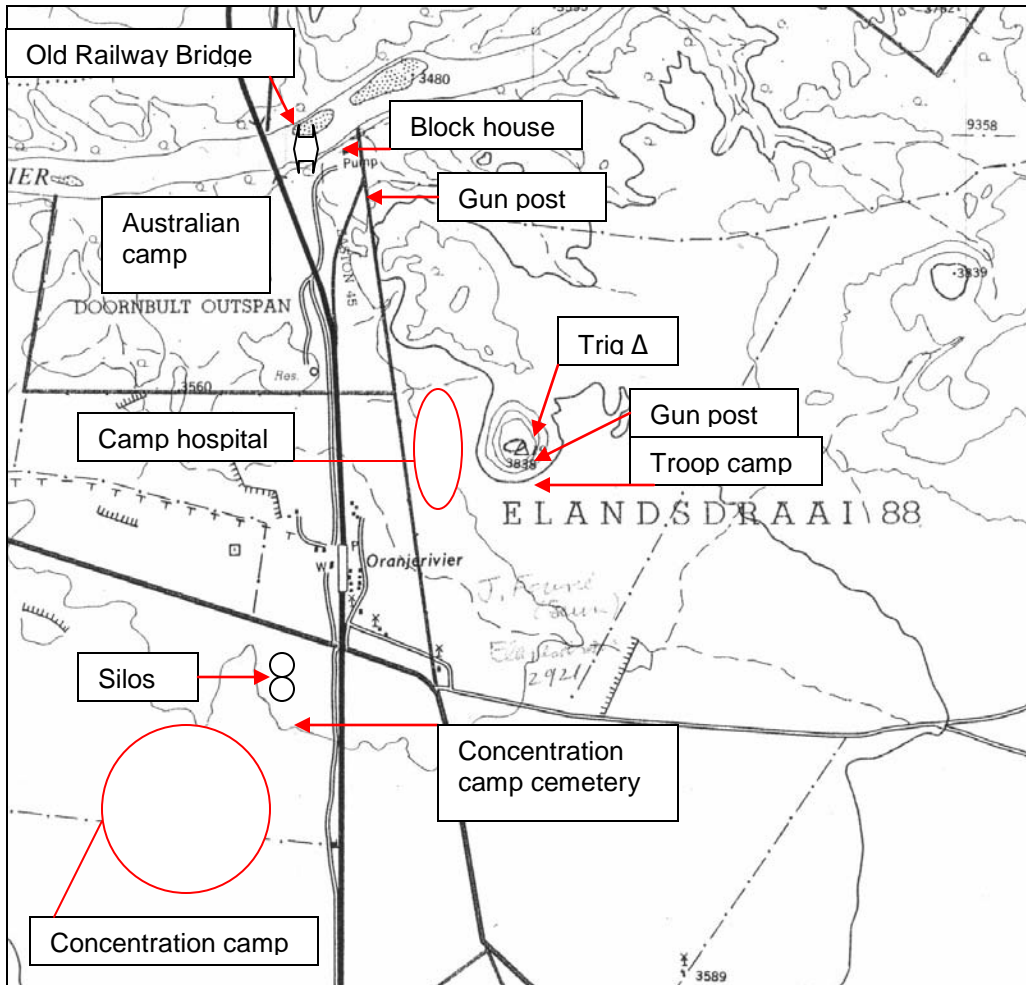
### LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Map 1 Placing of the MTN mast in relation to Orange River station, Hopetown and other towns in the Free State and Northern Cape.



Map 2 Locality of the MTN mast near Orange River Station, Hopetown district.



Map 3 Layout of activities around Hopetown and Orange River Station area during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)



Fig.1 View from the foot of the hill.



Fig.2 View along the proposed route to the mast.



Fig.3 Near the top of the hill.





Fig.4 View from the top of the hill facing towards Orange River Station.



Fig.5 Facing Orange River Station.



Fig.6 View towards Orange River Station.



Fig.7 Milk can with round lid. Note the heavy soldering characteristic of British Military rations during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) (Pocket knife = 83mm).



Fig.8 Glass bottle bottom (Pocket knife = 83mm)



Fig.9 Tin cans and metal containers on the surface. (Pocket knife = 83mm).



Fig.9 Tin cans on the surface at the foot of the hill. (Pocket knife = 83mm).



Fig.10 A small collection of stone flakes occurred on the surface (Pocket knife = 83mm).