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**A HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE
SABI BRIDGE POST OF STEINAECKER'S HORSE,
SKUKUZA DISTRICT, KRUGER NATIONAL PARK (REPORT NO. III)**

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OPSOMMING

Die terrein by Sabiebrug is een van verskeie wat tydens 'n opname van terreine wat met die Steinaecker's Horse militêre eenheid verband hou, geïdentifiseer is. Historiese inligting dui daarop dat dit een van die belangrike buiteposte van die eenheid was. Steinaecker's Horse was 'n vrywilligerseenheid wat tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902) aan die kant van die Britte geveg het.

Bouwerk aan die spoorlyn en treinbrug voor en na die Anglo-Boereoorlog het ook oorblyfsels op die terrein nagelaat. Die terrein is opgegrawe met die doel om meer oor Steinaecker's Horse vas te stel, maar ook om te probeer om die reste wat deur Steinaecker's Horse nagelaat is te onderskei van dit wat met die spoorlyn verband hou. Die navorsing het voorts ten doel om die kulturele materiaal wat opgegrawe is met die materiaal, wat by die Noordelike buitepos te Letaba gevind is, te vergelyk.

Tydens die derde opgrawingseisoen is drie opgrawings gedoen. Twee hiervan was die voortsetting van die opgrawing van twee strukture wat nie tydens die vorige seisoen voltooi is nie. Een opgrawing is gedoen op 'n area met klippe, wat ook gelyk het asof dit moontlik 'n struktuur kon wees.

'n Totaal van 1 753 artefakte is blootgelê. Dit is heelwat minder as wat tydens die eerste opgrawingseisoen gevind is en word daaraan toegeskryf dat die strukture minder voorwerpe bevat as die ashope en ongeïdentifiseerde areas van die vorige seisoen. Uit die voorwerpe is afgelei dat die terrein gewis 'n militêre teenwoordigheid gehad het en dus waarskynlik met Steinaecker's Horse verbind kan word. Die voorwerpe stem grootliks ooreen met dit wat op die terrein van die eenheid se Noordelike buitepos naby Letaba opgegrawe is. Nietemin is sekere aspekte wat eerder met die aanlê van die treinspoor verband hou ook geïdentifiseer.

SUMMARY

The Sabi Bridge site is one of a number of sites found during a survey of sites linked to the Steinaecker's Horse military unit. Historical information indicates that the site was one of the prominent outposts of the unit. Steinaecker's Horse was a voluntary unit who fought on the side of the British during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902).

Work that was done on the railway line and train bridge before and after the War also left remains on the site. The site was excavated in order to learn more about Steinaecker's Horse, but also to distinguish between remains from this unit and that left as a result of work on the railway line. The research aimed at comparing cultural material from the site with that excavated at the Northern outpost of the unit at Letaba.

During the third excavation season three excavations were conducted. Two of these were the continuation on two structures which were not completed during the previous season. One was done at an area with rocks which looked as if it could possibly be another structure.

In total 1 753 artefacts were uncovered. This is much less than what was unearthed during the first excavation season. It is believed that the structures contained fewer artefacts than middens and unidentified areas excavated previously. From the objects it is concluded that the site definitely had a military presence and that it can therefore probably be associated with Steinaecker's Horse. The objects are mostly similar to those excavated at the northernmost outpost of the unit close to Letaba. Certain aspects linked to the building of the railway line were however also identified.

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1. Background to the project

The Anglo-Boer War took place between 1899 and 1902 in South Africa, and was fought between Great Britain and the two Boer republics, Transvaal (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek) and the Orange Free State (Pretorius 1999: 247). Steinaecker's Horse was a volunteer military unit that fought on the side of the British. They operated mainly in the Lowveld and Swaziland (Pienaar 1990: 343).

The Sabi Bridge post at Skukuza was one of several outposts manned by them in order to safeguard the area from the Boers. The post was one of the largest outposts and is one of five outposts that physically have been located. Due to its size it is believed that it may contain unique information about the daily lifestyle and routine of the inhabitants of such a military site (see for instance Pelsler & Van Vollenhoven 1998). Continued historical research is also being conducted, and it is believed that more of these sites might be located in future, providing more research opportunities.

The site was located during a field survey in 2003 (Van Vollenhoven et. al. 2003a: 21-23). During 1997, 2000 and 2002 the Letaba outpost manned by Steinaecker's Horse was excavated. The research resulted in interesting information of the unit, specifically concerning the role local black people played at the outpost (see Van Vollenhoven et.al.1998a: 58-61; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998b: 119-120; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2001: 46-54; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003b: 47-55).

A comparison of material from this site with that at Sabi Bridge will probably result in learning more in this regard. Therefore it was decided to excavate the Sabi Bridge site.

The site was also used during the construction of the Selati railway line during the 1890s. A steel bridge was constructed here to carry the train across the river. For this reason it is important to consider that the site contains artefacts resulting from different activities and that one has to distinguish between these. The site was also used more recently by the former South African Defence Force. Artefacts from this period can also be seen on the site, but since it is fairly recent it can easily be distinguished from the older ones.

The research project was undertaken by **ArchaeTNOS** cc. Permission to do the research was obtained from the South African National Parks. An archival survey was done in the National Archives in Pretoria during 2002 and 2003 and is still continuing in order to obtain more information. Historical documents obtained from the British National Archives were also studied and the information it contained used. Excavation on the site was first done in August 2005. This was followed by a second excavation season in August 2006. This report deals with the findings of the third excavation season of August 2007.

2. Problem formulation

2.1 Discussion of the problem

Colonel Ludwig von Steinaecker was an important historical figure in the Lowveld, who had an enriching influence on the environment and its people. The history of his unit, Steinaecker's Horse, is full of legends and controversy.

The historical and archaeological research of the Northern outpost was enlightening. It showed that there was social differentiation between the different units at the outpost and for the first time archaeological excavations gave an indication of the role of black soldiers and local inhabitants during the Anglo-Boer War. Since this is the only site associated with Steinaecker's Horse that was researched up to now and confirmed as being a Steinaecker's Horse site, this information needs to be contextualised by comparing the similarities and differences other such sites show in this regard. Also, too little is still known about the everyday life and circumstances of the unit.

Historical and archival research has indicated the location of more of the sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse. Some of these were physically located, but need to be confirmed as Steinaecker's Horse sites by means of archaeological excavations. This will also contribute to the contextualisation of existing information.

2.2 Motivation

- a. The research on Steinaecker's Horse is the first, and was for a long time the only project of its kind where archaeology is combined with historical sources in writing the history of an aspect of the Anglo Boer War. This groundbreaking method has already lead to vital new information about the participation of those groups who's role has been neglected in writing the history of this War. Continued research will undoubtedly add to rectifying some of the imbalances of the past.
- b. Research on this unit, which served during the Anglo Boer War (1899-1902), has concentrated up to now on the Northern outpost at Letaba. However the point has been reached where nothing more could be learned from this site. In order to fully understand the contribution of this unit in the history of the Lowveld and the Kruger National Park, it has become necessary to broaden the research to other sites linked to Steinaecker's Horse.
- c. Aspects that need to be researched in more detail as it proved to be some of the important issues at the Northern outpost, are the following:
 - The involvement of local (black) people in this unit, but also their involvement in the Anglo Boer War. This aspect of the War has received little attention from researchers up to now and it is believed that it would increase our knowledge on this neglected part of South Africa's history.
 - The way of life, social circumstances and contribution of the Steinaecker's Horse unit to this era in South African history. This will also shed light on the human side (cultural history) of a part of our heritage.
- d. The correct identification and interpretation of more sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse will be a valuable contribution to the heritage of the Kruger National Park and will increase research and tourism opportunities, especially in the field of cultural heritage management.
- e. Previous research on the Northern outpost of the Steinaecker's Horse unit can only be seen as a first important step in documenting this information. It is therefore necessary that research now focus on similar sites in order to compare these. In this way more information on the War in this area will be gathered.
- f. A display of the research done on the mentioned site was installed at the Mopani rest camp in November 2001 and was moved to the new Makhadzi picnic spot in October 2003. By doing this the artifacts was returned as close as possible to its place of origin, which is in line with legislation and international trends in the curating and displaying of cultural material. Since members of the Steinaecker's Horse unit

played an important role in the establishment of the Kruger National Park, this is also an appropriate way to remember these pioneers. It also shows the park's involvement in the conservation of its cultural heritage, but also the cultural heritage of the area. The display also provides the visitor to the park with an additional heritage experience. Displays however need to be upgraded from time to time as it might become damaged and new information might be available from the latest research.

- g. Natural factors, such as erosion and the burrowing of certain animals, proved a major threat to the site that has been excavated as well as on most of the sites that have since been identified. It has been proved that up to 24 cm of soil has been washed away from the site of the Northern outpost over a period of 5 years. The information contained within this soil, e.g. cultural material that are washed away, may be vital to the conservation and preservation of the sites as well as for research and management purposes.
- h. Soldiers of Steinaecker's Horse, black volunteers and local inhabitants occupied the Northern outpost. A comparison of excavated material coming from different refuse middens showed social differences between the groups. Subsequently the research on other sites can help with the reconstruction of the social circumstances during the Anglo Boer War. Comparative material from the other Steinaecker's Horse sites is thus needed to further enhance this aspect.
- i. The research will emphasise the involvement of the SA National Parks and particularly the Kruger National Park in the involvement of cultural heritage conservation and tourism.
- j. The Steinaecker's Horse unit played a vital role in the establishment of the Kruger National Park. Stevenson-Hamilton used a document, concerning the conservation of the wild life that was drafted by the second in command of the unit, Major A Greenhill-Gardyne, when he started working in the park. The commander of the unit, Colonel Ludwig von Steinaecker, was an important historical figure in this area. His famous military strategy and corps formed an important part of the history of the Lowveld, especially that of the Kruger National Park. Harry Wolhuter, famous game warden in the Park, as well as some other rangers, was members of Steinaecker's Horse.

3. Hypothesis

The research was undertaken to show a connection between historical information and the archaeological evidence with regards to Steinaecker's Horse on the Sabi Bridge post.

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The collection of historical information relating to the Steinaecker's Horse unit and specifically the Sabi Bridge post.
- 3.1.2 The collection of archaeological data from the site.
- 3.1.3 The comparison of excavated material from the different sites, to determine whether there was social differentiation between the different units at the a site and to obtain information on the participation and role of black people on the site especially in connection with their lifestyle and their position regarding the Anglo-Boer War as a whole.

3.1.4 To distinguish between cultural material associated with Steinaecker's Horse and material from other cultural activities on the site, such as the construction of the railway line and bridge.

3.1.5 The archaeological investigation of possible activity areas on the site.

3.1.6 To determine the extent of the Sabi Bridge site.

3.1.7 To monitor potential erosion on the site.

3.2. Research strategy

The research has universal interest as it falls within the Anglo-Boer War, which is seen as one of the most important events in the history of South Africa. With the participation of black people in the war one of the most important aspects being investigated currently, (this was neglected for a long time) the research is seen as also being extremely relevant.

The archaeological research on the Letaba outpost was up to now the only archaeological investigations on an Anglo-Boer War site in order to specifically investigate the role black people played. The research on the Sabi Bridge post is an extension of that research. As the commemoration of the war was declared one of the legacy projects of the National Government, it also is of national importance.

4. Motivation for the research

4.1 The importance of Steinaecker's Horse in the history of the Lowveld was clearly stated in the previous reports (Van Vollenhoven et. al. 1998a: 3; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2001: 2, 8, 54; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003a: 5, 7; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003b: 2-3, 55), which deals with the excavations on the Letaba site in 1997, 2000 and 2002 as well as the survey of Steinaecker's Horse sites done in 2003. Emphasis should however be placed on the important role, although indirectly, that the unit played in the establishment of the Kruger National Park. Some former members of the unit later on became rangers in the park and used their knowledge of the area, gained during the War to their, and ultimately, the Park's advantage.

4.2 In all the mentioned reports the washing away of the cultural material was indicated as being a major concern. At the Letaba outpost it was determined that between 10,5 and 24cm of topsoil was washed away between 1997 and 2002 and the signs of similar occurrences could be seen at the sites located during the survey in 2003. In the process numerous artefacts probably also were lost resulting in much less from which history can be learned.

4.3 The uniqueness of the site, being a major outpost of Steinaecker's Horse, makes it an important site to be investigated.

4.4 The marketing of the site as part of the Kruger National Park and that the Park is concerned about not only the natural environment, but also the cultural environment, is of great importance. It shows a holistic approach to conservation. It also forms part of the South African nation's legacy, in accordance with the National Heritage Act

(no 25 of 1999). The site is protected by this law, which clearly states that archaeological sites older than 100 years, military sites older than 75 years and historical sites older than 60 years should be conserved. The Sabi Bridge site falls within all three these categories.

5. Location

The Sabi Bridge post of Steinaecker's Horse, is situated more or less 1 kilometre northeast of the Skukuza rest camp in the Kruger National Park (figure 1-2). It lies off the tourist route, but from the site the camp is visible. The site lies to the east of the train bridge over the Sabie River on the northern bank of the river. However, artefacts similar to those found east of the bridge, was also found to the west thereof. These are scattered over a large area and does not seem to be as concentrated as those on the eastern side. Very few artefacts were found on the southern embankment of the river and it is believed that the part of the outpost that existed here was mostly demolished as a result of the building of the Skukuza rest camp.

The GPS coordinates of the site is 24°59'17"S and 31°35'53"E on the map 2431CD, Newington, of the South African 1:50 000 topographic series.

6. Site description

The site was not much overgrown, indicating that it might have been flooded within the last number of years. Some areas were almost clear from vegetation, but others were more densely vegetated. Large trees are also visible, especially close to the river bank. Smaller trees and bushes on the site indicate some disturbance on the site at a certain stage in the past.

With the area cleared of dense vegetation it was possible to more or less determine the perimeters of the site. More areas with cultural material were visible than during 2005 when it was determined that the site stretches up to 120 m in diameter. The remains of at least one possible structure were found further to the north of what was believed to be the northern edge of the site. This probably was washed open by the rain of the 2005/06 rain season and stresses the threat to the site. A GPS measurement was taken here, namely: 24°59'15"S and 31°35'50"E at a height of 276 m.

During the 2007 excavation season much more indications of possible structures (indicated by hut clay remains and stones) were seen. This again is the result of the soil being washed away during the 2006/07 rain season.

The part of the site to the east of the railway bridge now seems to be 120 m in diameter. The site is extended to the western side of the railway bridge, but apart from a scatter of cultural material nothing else of importance was noticed. Historical information indicate that a block house was built on the southern side of the bridge and although cultural remains were found on the southern side of the bridge, it is clear that the development of the Skukuza rest camp resulted in most of the remains being demolished. On the northern side of the Sabie River, the site goes right up to the bank of the river (figure 3).

Due to the openness of the area it was easy to determine areas containing cultural deposits, making it easy to determine areas on the site to be excavated. The excavation of one area

with clay debris excavated during 2006 proved to be a structure. A large heap of soil, also excavated during 2006 was another structure. These excavations were now extended in order to fully uncover these remains.

The site is basically flat with a gentle slope towards the Sabie River. On the western side a steep unnatural bank of soil was constructed for the railway tracks and the railway bridge are also found here.

Cultural material was scattered over a large area. Apart from different areas with indications of hut clay, a number of possible refuse middens were also located on the site. The most promising of these was already excavated during 2005, but an additional excavation was also done in 2006 in order to determine more of its size and contents. Most of the other scatters proved to be nothing more than larger concentrations of cultural material, without any clear meaning. This probably is the result of artifacts being washed open and therefore being scattered all over the site.

7. Historical background

7.1 The Anglo Boer War in the Lowveld

This aspect was extensively dealt with in previous reports (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998a; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2000; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003b; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2006; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2007). However, new information has since been recovered from historical sources and will therefore be included in this report.

The Anglo Boer War took place between 1899 and 1902 in South Africa, and was fought between Great Britain and the two Boer republics, Transvaal (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek) and the Orange Free State (Pretorius 1999: 247). After the British forces captured Pretoria on 5 June 1900 fortified posts were established at strategic positions all over South Africa. The purpose thereof was to protect routes such as railway lines and roads (Van Vollenhoven 1999: 80). The importance of the railway line is emphasized by the fact that the Boers also implemented protective measures at the time they were still in control thereof (NAD, SS0, R 8496/00).

The system of blockhouses was erected since the railway links was to a large extent being left defenceless. As this was an important communication system, the British decided to have it protected. The first of these fortified posts were erected in July 1900. Most of these blockhouses were double storied and took about three months to build (Van Vollenhoven 1999: 80-81).

By January 1901 the large scale erection of blockhouses along railway lines was at the order of the day. These were corrugated iron structures and much smaller than those built from stone and could therefore be built much quicker. From March 1901 these blockhouses were also erected at other strategic positions such as roads. It was used to prevent the Boers from moving around freely. By January 1902 the blockhouse lines were completed. Blockhouses were placed more or less three quarters to one and a half mile apart (1,20 - 2,40km). As much as 8 000 blockhouses were eventually built over a distance of 6 000 kilometres (Van Vollenhoven 1999: 81).

Since there was little military confrontation in the Lowveld between the British forces and the Boers, the task of the British forces in the area was mainly to guard communication routes, especially the Eastern Railway Line between the Transvaal and Mozambique (Bornman 2004: 1). For this purpose the British erected several blockhouses along the railway line at Nelspruit, Kaapmuiden, Malelane, Komatipoort and at Barberton (Bornman 2004: 1; Van Vollenhoven & Van den Bos 1997: 50-52).

At the Malelane station a double-storey blockhouse was built to gain sufficient height to keep watch over the drift in the Crocodile River. At Kaapmuiden a garrison was placed and a heliograph post was established on the mountain south of the town. Their main task was to guard the bridge across the Kaap River against possible destruction by the Boer forces (Bornman 2004: 1).

On a hill to the south of the present national road (N4), opposite the Krokodilpoort station, two stone forts were erected (Bornman 2004: 1, Van Vollenhoven & Van den Bos 1997: 56-58). The purpose of these was to guard the old Mara transport route through the drift in the Crocodile River as well as the railway line through the Gorge (Bornman 2004: 1).

During the war a garrison occupied Nelspruit and erected a lookout post and heliograph on a hill west of the town. Although there were sporadic attacks on the town and environs, no large scale fighting took place (Bornman 2004: 1).

At Barberton a burgher camp was established at the beginning of the war. The British Commander-in-Chief, Lord FS Roberts commanded on 19 July 1900 that all women and children found on farms were to be sent to the Boers fighting in the war. The Boers then sent them to this camp in Barberton. After General JDP French occupied Barberton on the 15 September 1900, the camp was under British command (Bornman 2004: 1-2).

On 14 September 1900 a special edition of the ZAR Government Gazette was printed at Komatipoort. It printed permission to State President SJP Kruger to leave the country for Europe in order to plead the case of the Boers. The gazette also included regulations for the organisation of the Boer forces (NAD, AMPT PUBS 83C). The Boers evacuated Komatipoort on 18 September 1900 (Tempelhoff 1982: 9).

General R Pole-Carew reached Komatipoort on 24 September 1900 resulting in the evacuation of all Boer positions near the Portuguese frontier (Richards 1999: 129). The British now stationed a garrison at Komatipoort to patrol the eastern border where several forts were erected by the Steinaecker's Horse unit (Bornman 2004: 2; Tempelhoff 1982: 9).

From the position of the fortifications and other military structures on this site, it is clear that the railway and bridge also had to be protected by them. The British even tried to blow up the bridge before they occupied the town of Komatipoort, but they were prevented from doing so (NAD, SS0, R 7251/00).

Steinaecker's Horse was a volunteer military unit that fought on the side of the British. It operated mainly in the Lowveld and Swaziland (Pienaar 1990: 343). They are one of the lesser-known units and were not reported on regularly, possibly because the unit was not regarded as having a significant role during the War. From what is to follow, it however will become clear that the unit did play an important role during the War, but that it had more importance in creating a suitable environment for the establishment of the Kruger National

Park. The historical information given here focus on background information on the Commanding Officer of the unit, Ludwig von Steinaecker, the Steinaecker's Horse unit and the different outposts they established during the War.

The Sabi Bridge post of Steinaecker's Horse, which is the one that was excavated between 2005 and 2007, is one of a number of outposts established by the unit. The unit was formed by Francis Christiaan Ludwig von Steinaecker (Van Vollenhoven et.al.1998a: 6).

7.2 Steinaecker's Horse

Francis Christiaan Ludwig von Steinaecker

The Steinaecker's Horse unit was formed by Francis Christiaan Ludwig von Steinaecker, a former Prussian-German soldier with vast military experience (SA National Museum of Military History 920; Forsyth 1972: 20-23). His life story is that of an adventurer, somewhat controversial and eventually ending under tragic circumstances.

He was born on 28 September 1854 in Berlin, Germany (NAD, MHG 32062). His father was Colonel Baron Von Steinaecker of the Prussian Guard and his mother Baroness Von Thumen of Liegnitz. His military career started in 1871 when he entered the Prussian Army (Leinz Grenadiers). He resigned eight years later to join the ruling prince of Battenburg (Bulgaria), Prince Alexander, in his military voyages (Conway 1978: 30; Jones 1996: 6).

The next thing known about him is that he came to Southern Africa in 1886, working as a cartographer in German South West Africa (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998a: 6-8). After having a disagreement with the colonial government he went to the Cape Colony in 1889 in connection with a German filibustering expedition to Pondoland (Bornman 2004: 2; Jones 1996: 6).

During 1890 he settled in the Port Shepstone district in Natal, where he managed a farm for one Charles Reed (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998: 6-8; Bornman 2004: 2). He became chairman of the Port Shepstone Political Association and therefore corresponded with the government on a variety of issues regarding the development of the town. He stayed in 52 Aitken Street (Jones 1996: 6). He became a British subject on 29 June 1897. Von Steinaecker later went into partnership with CF Kniesel as a contractor, but the business failed and he was declared bankrupt on 13 September 1899 (Jones 1996: 6). After the Anglo-Boer War broke out he enlisted as a private in the Colonial Scouts in November 1899 (Forsyth 1972: 21; Stirling 1907: 271; Jones 1996: 6). The Colonial Scouts unit was raised by the Natal Government (Bornman 2004: 2).

Von Steinaecker rose rapidly to squadron quartermaster-sergeant. He was transferred to the intelligence department on promotion to the rank of lieutenant (Jones 1996: 6; Bornman 2004: 2; Diespecker 1996: 98; Stirling 1907: 271; Cattrick 1959: 178). In December of that year, and early in 1900 he approached General Sir R Henry Buller, the commander in Natal, with a proposal to blow up the railway bridge at Komatipoort behind the Boer lines in order to hamper their retreat. This was allowed and Von Steinaecker recruited six men, from the Colonial Scouts, at £1 per day, with rations. They travelled through Eshowe, Zululand and eventually reached the homestead of Mbudula Mahlalela, on the Lebombo Range, who lived at Lomahasha (sic) on the border between Swaziland and Mozambique (Bornman 2004: 2;

Diespecker 1996: 98; Stirling 1907: 271; Cattrick 1959: 178; Jones 1996: 6-7). Nomahasha became his first headquarters.

Diespecker gives indications that this plan might not have originated with Von Steinaecker, but with the British Intelligence Command. From the version by Jones (1996: 1-6) it is clear that the plan originated with the British Intelligence in Lourenco Marques, but that it seemed as if the plan leaked out and therefore it was disposed of. According to Matsebula (1972: 87) Steinaecker recruited seven men for this task. On his way through Swaziland, the number of his followers grew to 40 and they were nicknamed the Forty thieves.

They intended to blow up the Great Komati Bridge, but it was too heavily guarded (Jones 1996: 6-7; Diespecker 1996: 98; Stirling 1907: 272; Cattrick 1959: 178). Von Steinaecker returned to Lourenco Marques, where it was decided to blow up a smaller bridge close to Malelane as this was unguarded. The unit was equipped again and they obtained the assistance of JB Holgate as a guide (Diespecker 1996: 98; Stirling 1907: 272; Cattrick 1959: 178; Jones 1996: 6-7). For this purpose they packed 100 pounds of explosives around the 80 feet high bridge and nearby pump house. On 17 June 1900 this task was completed. As a result of the damages a goods train was wrecked. The driver and stoker, CA Samuelson, was killed and the guard badly injured. The blowing up of the bridge halted traffic for fourteen days (Jones 1996: 7; Bornman 2004: 3).

They then moved back to Lubombo in Swaziland followed by a small party of Boers under command of Commandant GMJ van Dam of the State Artillery, which were sent to investigate the matter of the blowing up of the railway (Jones 1996: 8). Colonel Van Dam and Lieutenant Schribley of the Boer forces enquired about Von Steinaecker's whereabouts at the homestead of Chief Mbhudula Mahlalela, but were ambushed by Von Steinaecker. Schribley was killed and Van Dam captured (Matsebula 1972: 87). Some sources indicate that several Boers were killed (Diespecker 1996: 98; Jones 1996: 8; Stirling 1907: 272).

These incidents impressed General Buller and on his return to Natal Von Steinaecker persuaded the military authorities to fund an irregular corps led by him to patrol the Portuguese border. He was thus permitted to raise his own cavalry unit, called Steinaecker's Horse. Von Steinaecker was now promoted to the rank of major and started recruiting refugees from the Transvaal and Swaziland to his force (Stirling 1907: 271; Bornman 2004: 3; Cattrick 1959: 178; Forsyth 1972: 21).

More successes against the Boers followed and there were indications that the Boers believed the corps to have a strength of up to 200 men. The British realised it could therefore be useful to them to increase the actual number of the unit (Jones 1996: 8). Von Steinaecker was therefore allowed to increase the numbers of his unit. This mounted force was initially restricted to a total of 300 men, who were paid ten shillings per day, together with an allowance of pickles, fresh milk and rum or whisky, to 'ward off fever' (Bornman 2004: 3; Cattrick 1959: 178). Later on the unit had a strength of 450 men, mostly consisting of local inhabitants of the Lowveld region. They operated in the Lowveld and Swaziland and although they did not experience much action, they were involved in a few skirmishes against the Boers (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998a: 8; S.A. National Museum of Military History: 920; Forsyth 1972: 20-23; Paynter 1986: 48).

Von Steinaecker was promoted to lieutenant colonel towards the end of the War and he received the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) on 8 April 1902 (Pelser & Van

Vollenhoven 1998: 31). During 1907 he tried to raise a permanent commission with the British Army, but was unsuccessful (NAD, SNA 321, NA 1321/06).

After the War he tried to establish his unit as a permanent border guard. However after going to London and trying to take part in the coronation procession of King Edward VII with his own contingent, he was removed from his command. On his return to Komatipoort, he seized his command again and proceeded with his duties (Cattrick 1959: 180-181). Only after almost two more years had passed, he was finally relieved of his command.

Documents found in the National Archives Depot in Pretoria give some insight into his life after the War. In these documents it can be seen that Colonel Von Steinaecker signed his name without the prefix, which in Germany was an indication of his status as a nobleman. He signed his name Colonel F. Steinaecker (NAD, LD 931, AG 6498/04). Only four documents referring to him were found in the National Archives Depot.

In the first of these he asked permission to keep two relics from the War. These were two rifles, which did not work any more. He eventually got permission from the Law Department to keep these without a permit (NAD, LD 931, AG 6498/04). Coupled with his attempts to have his unit retained as a border guard, it shows something about his sentiments regarding the war.

After the War he became a farmer, but did not have much success (Cattrick 1959: 182). In a letter he complains about the seed that was sent to him. The letter was written on the farm London, where he resided, close to the town of Bushbuck Ridge (NAD: CS 636, 6274, Letter from Colonel F. Steinaecker, 24.11.1905). Here he also tried tobacco farming, but it was a failure (Bornman 2004: 5).

The third document is also a letter written by him in which he complains about the wild animals destroying his fields (NAD: NAD 321, NA 1321/06, Letter from F. Steinaecker to the Secretary of Native Affairs).

The last document once again provides insight regarding his controversial life and personality. It is a file from the Supreme Court of South Africa and contains information on the court case between Baron Francis Steinaecker and the Transvaal Estates Company from which he leased the land on which he resided. On 23 February 1903 he entered into a twenty-year lease with them, to stay and farm on the southern portion of the farm London 361 in the Lydenburg district (NAD, TPD 8/44, 952/1911).

It is interesting that the agent he used was Adolf von Steinaecker from Johannesburg, but it is not clear what the relationship between them was. In one of the documents F Steinaecker is addressed as esquire, indicating that he was not married. He farmed with tobacco and cotton, was given permission to remove natives from the farm and was obliged to keep the water furrows and fences intact.

After not paying his lease for certain periods during 1910-1912, he was told to leave the farm on 19 October 1911 and to be in court on 9 December 1911. On 7 December 1911 he wrote a sworn affidavit in which he stated his case. From this the following information is interesting. He stated that his cotton farming was not very successful and that the company were trying to get rid of him without proper reason. According to him they also got rid of other tenants after these people made considerable changes (for the better) to the property,

as did he in building a road, which he was not compensated for. He further stated that although the land was leased to him with apparent good agricultural properties, mealies refused to grow there.

He also stated that he did not have any means to travel to court and that he did not have the money to oppose their request for his removal. One of the reasons given for his poor financial position was that the company sold his cotton and did not pay him for this. He also alleged to have been appointed as Consulting Agriculturist to the company's cotton estate at Maboke, but that he never received his salary. According to him he got this appointment as he was a "...col ledge (sic) man from the Agriculture Colledge of Poplau – Germany." (NAD, TPD 8/44, 952/1911).

From the company's records however it seems that he had already been asked to leave the farm on 9 September 1911, as he did not gather the crops. Accounts included in the document indicate that payment for the cotton, which the company sold on his behalf, was taken into consideration in determining the amount he owed them. It therefore seems as if most of his allegations were unfounded and on 14 December 1911 the court ordered him to leave the farm before 24 January 1912 (NAD, TPD 8/44, 952/1911).

After leaving the farm he stayed for a while with the Native Commissioner for Graskop, John Griffiths at Bushbuckridge. After a while Griffiths' wife however gave him an ultimatum to choose between her and Von Steinaecker resulting in the latter having to leave (Bornman 2004: 5). John Travers, a former member of Steinaecker's Horse, then took pity on him and allowed him to live on his farm Champagne¹ in the Lydenburg district (Bornman 2004: 5; Cattrick 1959: 182). It is not certain when he left, but after having a difference in opinion with his employer he was asked to leave the farm. He eventually poisoned himself with strychnine on 30 April 1917 (Bornman 2004: 5). He is buried near Acornhoek (NAD, MHG 32062; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998a: 9).

Founding of Steinaecker's Horse

It has been mentioned that Von Steinaecker was permitted to raise his own cavalry unit in 1900 (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998: 8; Bornman 2004: 3), which became known as Steinaecker's Horse from early 1901 (Bornman 2004: 3). This came into being under Army Order 214 of 7 November 1900, meaning that the unit was raised as a unit of the British Army and it seized to be a guerrilla unit funded by the intelligence. Its headquarters were now established at Komatipoort and it had a depot in Pietermaritzburg (Jones 1996: 10).

Their barracks were on the border with Mozambique and the remains of cement platforms, forts and other buildings linked to them are still to be seen on the Lebombo Mountain close to Komatipoort (Van Vollenhoven 2004: 45). The stone enclosures, where the horses were stabled at night, to protect them from marauding lions, and the canon positions, pointing inland, are also still in evidence (Bornman 2004: 3). The unit were under the command of the South African Mounted Irregular Forces (Diespecker 1996: 101).

The Steinaecker's Horse unit eventually comprised about 450 white soldiers and 300 black troops, consisting of Swazi, Pedi and Shangane. Although most of the members of the unit were local inhabitants of the Lowveld, some officers and men were seconded to the unit

¹ Some sources indicate the name of the farm as being Castle.

from the British Army and Cape Mounted Rifles (Cattrick 1959: 179). It was however not only the British who made use of black troops. Prove was also found that the Boers used black spies at Komatipoort (NAD, SS0, R 8433X/00).

After the capture of Komatipoort by the British in September 1900, the unit was sent to Sabi Bridge along the Selati railway line to pursue a Boer convoy, but were unsuccessful. They were accompanied by Captain ADG Greenhill-Gardyne of the Gordon Highlanders. During this trip trooper Smart was attacked by a lion and he died later of his injuries (Jones 1996: 9-10). Greenhill-Gardyne later on became the Second-in-command of the unit.

Members of the unit were initially paid 8 shillings a day, which were raised to 9 shillings after six months and 10 after a year. This was much more than the 7 shillings per week paid to British infantry soldiers (<http://www.elite-collections.com/1899-1908.htm>). Non-commissioned officers were paid an additional shilling per day (Woolmore 2006: 45). It is therefore understandable that Von Steinaecker easily got enough members for his unit.

The unit was essentially self-contained and ran its own workshops, transport and intelligence system and made use of a haphazard train service between Komatipoort and Sabi Bridge (now Skukuza) in the Kruger National Park (Stirling 1907: 273; Bornman 2004: 3).

It is also known that the British Intelligence frequently liaised with Von Steinaecker during the War (Diespecker 1996: 2). It is for instance indicated that the unit received their supplies from Lourenco Marques (Diespecker 1996: 3). A letter written by a certain A Campbell from the British Consulate in Lourenco Marques to Colonel Sandbach on 14 August 1900, makes reference to Steinaecker's Horse and the role they fulfilled during that time (Diespecker 2000: 2-3). In the letter it is mentioned that the work done by Steinaecker's Horse is pleasing and that their well-arranged patrols led the Boers to believe they are far more in number than what they really were.

It is interesting to note that there existed a secret agreement between the British and Portuguese Government that the last mentioned would stay neutral during the war (Diespecker 1996: 1; Diespecker 2000: 1-9). This was called the Anglo-Portuguese Agreement of 14 October 1900. One can however reason that the good relations between Mozambique and the ZAR may have necessitated such an agreement. Pro-Boer people probably did not keep this agreement and therefore such a border guard was a necessity.

Diespecker (2000: 1) also indicate that many Portuguese people were definitely not neutral and that they tended to favour the ZAR. He and other scholars also gives information on smuggling activities from Portuguese territory aimed at arming and supplying the Boers (Diespecker 2000: 1-9; Jones 1996: 1-2). From the information it however is clear that the secret treaty were actually not aimed at keeping the Portuguese neutral, but to actively end support to the Boers (Diespecker 2000: 8).

The mentioned treaty was in direct contravention with the 1875 treaty of Friendship and Commerce between the ZAR and Portugal (Diespecker 2000: 8). Jones (1996: 2-3) gives account of more serious military actions being planned by the British against the Boers, focussing on activities in Portuguese territory and in Swaziland. This included the blowing up of the Komatipoort train bridge mentioned earlier, for which £ 10 000 was authorised.

To equip his unit, Von Steinaecker ordered a large amount of weapons. This included no less than 100 000 rounds of carbine ammunition, 10 000 Maxim cartridges with belts as well as 1 000 revolver cartridges, fifty carbines with buckets and bandoliers, fifty revolvers, a Maxim tripod, a mountain gun and six mule loads of ammunition as well as clothing and sundry equipment for the horses (Diespecker 1996: 99; Jones 1994: 108). He was also given full support in assisting him to raise his unit. On his request he also now assumed the rank of major (Diespecker 1996: 99). The unit even had its own badge.

Von Steinaecker designed his own uniform. It consisted of a long double-breasted khaki frock coat with large silver buttons and epaulettes. He wore a flat Guardsman's cap with silver lace decorations. On his feet he wore riding breeches and boots with enormous spurs. A large sabre buckled to his waist and adorned with silver aiguillettes rounded off the uniform (Cattrick 1959: 180).

Members of the Steinaecker's Horse unit

The following people are known to have been members of the Steinaecker's Horse unit²:

Officers and non-commissioned officers:

Lieutenant-Colonel FC Ludwig von Steinaecker – Commanding Officer

Major AW Greenhill-Gardyne – Adjutant and in command at Sabi Bridge and previously from the Gordon Highlanders (Pienaar 1990: 343, 347, 349; Cattrick 1959: 179)

Major R Robertson – for a time in command at Sabi Bridge and previously from the Fourth Hussars and Royal Dragoons (Pienaar 1990: 343, 347, 349; Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 19)

Captain EG (Gaza) Gray - in command at Gomondwane (Sardelli's shop) (Pienaar 1990: 619)

Captain JB Holgate – stationed at Sabi Bridge (NAD, PMO28, PM 1973/01; Jones 1996:7) – Stirling (1907: 262) mentions that he was a British settler.

Captain E Holgate (Bornman 2004: 3) – this probably is Edward Holgate who was a citizen of the ZAR, and who resided in Komatipoort before the War (NAD, KG 309, CR 4703/98)

Captain David Forbes – stationed in Swaziland (Matsebula 1972:90)

Captain M'Queen (Stirling 1907: 262)

Captain HO (or D) Webbstock

Lieutenant GF Arran Gore – in command at Signal Hill on the Kalishan Mountains (NAD, PMO 28, PM 1973/01)

Lieutenant HC (Harry) Wolhuter (Skukuza Archives 1902 – 1903; Bornman 2004: 3)

Lieutenant Charles Major – taken prisoner at Bremersdorp (Matsebula 1972: 89)

Surgery Lieutenant N Grieve – medical officer (NAD, LD 176, AG 6167/02)

Lieutenant WP Robertson – stationed in the Pietersburg area (Stirling 1907: 275)

Lieutenant pay master J Hartley (Stirling 1907: 275)

Lieutenant JM Dallamore

Lieutenant (?) D Buchanan

Lieutenant JA Baillie – killed two despatch riders on 4 July 1901 when they tried to cross the border (Stirling 1907: 276)

Sergeant-Major AR Colborne – one of the original first 6 men recruited (Conway 1978: 3; Bornman 2004: 3; Jones 1996: 6)

Sergeant-Major Colborne (Military Medal Society Newsletter 1979: 3)

² Numbers indicated in front of the names refer to the Regimental numbers of the soldiers.

Sergeant-Major Robinson – from the Steinaecker’s Horse Scouts
 Sergeant WF Walters (NAD, PMO 28, PM 1973/01)
 Sergeant J Munro – the Quartermaster (Jones 1996: 9; Pelser & Van Vollenhoven 1998: 31-37)
 1159 – Sergeant HE Barnes – died on 23 February 1902 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/4832/4)
 Sergeant Meissner – a scout and one of the first 6 men recruited
 Sergeant JA Lawson – a scout and one of the first 6 men recruited; he was promoted to the rank of captain before the end of the War
 Sergeant CS Carmichael – a scout and one of the first 6 men recruited (Jones 1996: 6, 9; Pelser & Van Vollenhoven 1998: 31-37; Bornman 2004: 3)
 Lance Corporal (later Sergeant) WS Hains – accompanied Lieutenant Baillie during the incident on 4 July 1901 (Stirling 1907: 276)
 Corporal AE Gray – a scout and one of the first 6 men recruited (Stirling 1907: 271-272; Pelser & Van Vollenhoven 1998: 31-37; Bornman 2004: 3; Jones 1996:6)
 1314 – Corporal Arthur Walker – died on 28 August 1902
 Corporal A Baagoe – died on 16 May 1902 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/4823/4)
 Treadwell – Acting Quartermaster (Military Medal Society Newsletter: 1979: 3)

Troopers:

B Duncan – a scout and one of the first 6 men recruited (Pelser & Van Vollenhoven 1998: 31-37; Bornman 2004: 3; Jones 1996: 6)
 1043 - Samuel Smart – killed by a lion at Sabi Bridge on 4 October 1900 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/4832/4; Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 17; Jones 1996: 10)
 1381 - RR Chambers – broke his neck when he fell off a horse at Nomahasha Camp on 24 October 1900 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/4823/4)
 O Engerstrom – committed suicide at Josanes in Swaziland on 13 June 1901
 G Gaines – caught by a crocodile in the Usutu River in Swaziland on 30 November 1901 (Pelser & Van Vollenhoven 1998: 31-37)
 SH (Harold) Trollope (Pienaar 1990: 347; Skukuza Archives unnumbered photograph)
 1586 - W Halpin – died having an epileptic fit in Komatipoort on 21 February 1902 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/4823/4)
 William (Bill) Sanderson (Bornman 2004: 4-5)
 Percy ‘Pump’ Willis – Stationed at Sabi Bridge
 Betram Churchill ‘Clinkers’ Willis – brother of ‘Pump’ and also stationed at Sabi Bridge (Pelser & Van Vollenhoven 1998: 31-32; Bornman 2004: 3; Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 17; Woolmore 2006: 18)
 Tom Paulin
 Charlie Woodlands
 Ben Harper (Pelser & Van Vollenhoven 1998: 31-32)
 J Springfield – died on 4 January 1903 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/4823/4)
 1055 – R Griffin – from Nomahasha Camp - died on 29 April 1901 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/4823/4). Jones (1996: 9) indicated that he died on 11 August 1900 of disease and that he was the first casualty of the unit
 CG Hill – from Nomahasha Camp - died on 29 April 1901
 1140 – RF Paton – from Nomahasha Camp - died on 23 April 1901 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/4823/4)
 1123 – Thomas – died on 23 December 1900
 1056 – WH Percy – from the Sabi River post - died on 24 January 1902
 1232 – Thomas Bogg – died on 1 July 1902

1327 – GG Garside – died on 4 May 1901
 1348 – David Blackall – died on 9 August 1901 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/4823/4)
 Percy Wood
 Neville Edwardes (Bornman 2004: 3)
 C Archibald – died at Waterval-Onder on 14 December 1901 from injuries sustained after being kicked by a horse (personal communication: WJ Verwoerd)
 Arthur Fraser – previously served with the 14th Hussars and Kitchener's Horse
 (<http://www.elite-collections.com/1899-1908.htm>)
 Jack Sandy – a farmer from the area who was recruited by Harry Wolhuter (Wolhuter 1948: 57)
 Sam (Wolhuter 1948: 59)
 Perry (Wolhuter 1948: 45)
 DE Wilson – rescued the body of a comrade which had been carried off by a crocodile at the Usutu River on 30 November 1901
 F Hennessy - rescued the body of a comrade which had been carried off by a crocodile at the Usutu River on 30 November 1901 (Stirling 1907: 275)
 WW Griffin – killed whilst taking a wounded comrade to cover (Stirling 1907: 275)
 Jules Diespecker – secretary to Von Steinaecker (Diespecker 2000: 4; Cattrick 1959: 180)
 A Hook – an illiterate farmer related to JB Holgate
 JTG Maber – son of a Swaziland trader
 TB Rathbone – a well known trader and storekeeper in Swaziland, age 60 when recruited
 JE Reilly – became manager of the tin mines in Swaziland after the War
 J Marston – erstwhile barman of the Bremersdorp hotel
 Joseph Pentland – became hotel keeper at Ressano Garcia after the War (Jones 1996: 8-9)
 Tom Boyd – the driver of the train between Komatipoort, Sabi Bridge and Kilo 104 until he died of drink on 2 July 1902 (Woolmore 2006: 18)

Stationed at Fort Mpisane:

Captain H Farmer Francis – killed in action on 7 August 1901
 1002 - Sergeant-Major Francis Barrett- taken Prisoner-of-War (POW) on 7 August 1901, later released
 1031 - Sergeant Buchanan Dale – taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1011 - Corporal John Barber - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1042 - Corporal Henry Savage - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released

Troopers:

1016 - William E Archer - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1213 – Evan L Banger - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1364 – William A Bennett (an American) - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1012 - Samuel Bowden - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1372 – William D Cooper - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1296 - William Frost – slightly wounded, taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1274 – Percy A Hills (Wills) - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1305 – Arthur R Jeffreys - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1267 – William T Jones - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1117 - Robert Longstaff (e) – slightly wounded on 7 August 1901
 1377 - William Muller - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
 1289 – Michael L Nolan - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released

1370 – Walter J Oak (Oates) - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
1110 - James Renaluna (Penaluna) – a miner from Barberton and taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released (Jones 1996: 8; Personal comment: B Woolmore)
1061 – David P Roberts – went missing on 7 August 1901, rejoined Steinaecker's horse
1180 - Demetrius Sardelli (a Greek) – went missing on 7 August 1901, rejoined Steinaecker's horse
1295 - John Soundy - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released
1368 – Joseph W Waits - taken POW on 7 August 1901, later released (Personal comment: B Woolmore)
1341 - R Luxford – died of disease on 11 June 1901 (NAD, TPS 37, TA 84/ 4823/4)
1214 – John Edmund Delacoer Travers – severely wounded on 7 August 1901 (Personal comment: B Woolmore; Bornman 2004: 3)

Role of Steinaecker's Horse during the War

As indicated Von Steinaecker was only given permission to raise his own cavalry unit after blowing up the Malelane train bridge. He now made his base at Nomahasha and raided Bremersdorp in March 1901 (Matsebula 1972: 87). This incident shows that Von Steinaecker himself engaged in some controversial actions. During the capture of Bremersdorp they raided the town and captured eight Boers and some wagons and supplies (Bornman 2004: 3; Matsebula 1972: 87). A detachment of the corps stayed there until the town was besieged by the Boer commando of General Tobias Smuts and Hans Grobler on 24 July 1901.

Von Steinaecker, being warned of the coming attack, fled the town on the previous night, leaving his men to defend the village as best they could. He however failed to nominate a detachment commander. Captain HO Webstock, who was in charge of the town detachment, claimed the honour, but was overruled by Captain AD Greenhill-Gardyne who was the only officer with regular military experience.

Under conflicting instructions Steinaecker's Horse retreated during the night of 22/23 July, and the Boers then infiltrated and surrounded the town. The Boers burned the small town, released Prince Mancibane and presented him with one of the wagons abandoned by Steinaecker's Horse (Bornman 2004: 4). During the attack four members of Steinaecker's Horse were killed, four wounded and seventeen taken prisoner. Captain Greenhill-Gardyne, second-in-command of the unit, managed to escape with the rest of the men (Pelser & Van Vollenhoven 1998: 31; Stirling 1907: 274; Matsebula 1972: 88-89). According to Matsebula (1972; 90) Von Steinaecker was now promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and his unit increased to 600 men.

When the unit established its headquarters at Komatipoort, Von Steinaecker commandeered Selati House, the house of Jules Diespecker, the General Manager of the railway, and even made Mr Diespecker his private secretary (Cattrick 1959: 180).

According to some historians, Steinaecker's Horse was reputedly engaged in some controversial activities, such as looting (Jones 1994: 103). Information in this regard was also found in the National Archives in Pretoria. For instance, a certain Gustav Schwab, who owned a store in Swaziland, wrote a letter to the Commissioner for Swaziland, in which he put in a claim for money which members of Steinaecker's Horse stole when they were in

Bremersdorp and Oshoek (NAD, CS 29, 3864/01; Letter From G. Schwab to the Resident Commissioner for Swaziland, 03.08.1901).

Steinaecker's Horse also raided various settlements, including Hhohho. They burgled the store of George Hutchinson and burned important historical documents regarding the history of Swaziland in the process. The store of BB Stewart at the foot of the Ngwenya range was also raided by them and a large amount of money stolen from him (Matsebula 1972: 87).

Another incident was that of goods taken from Ringler's store (presumably close to Komatipoort) in 1900. Apparently, around 13 October 1900, members of Steinaecker's Horse paid Mr Ringler a visit. Colonel Von Steinaecker himself told Ringler that he was neutral during the war as he was a German subject. This clearly was a lie. They found weapons, ammunition and three horses, which Ringler admitted belonged to Boers, as well as two full ZAR State Artillery uniforms. As Ringler was an outspoken pro-Boer he was captured and later deported.

In a report to the Compensations Board, the Commandant of Komatipoort, Lieutenant-Colonel JA Ansby, writes that troops from Steinaecker's Horse took the following from the store: on 16 October - 3 oxen, 7 cows and 3 calves; on 18 October - 1 iron bed and spring mattress, 1 coir mattress and spring mattress, 1 small iron bedstead, 1 meat safe, 3 scales, 1 mealie stamper, 1 mealie mill, 5 saws, 1 stove, 1 anvil, 4 scales, 9 coils iron wire, 2 small billy pots, 6 fire irons, 1 DB shot gun, 4 bread pans, 1 table, 1 bread trough, 2 boxes books, 1 set tools, 18 fowls and ducks since dead and 2 horses since dead. Apart from the animals, which are clearly stated not to be alive any more, all the other goods were kept at the quartermaster of Steinaecker's Horse at Komatipoort (NAD: PMO 42, PM 2835/01, Letter from the Commandant at Komatipoort to the Provost Marshall at Army Headquarters in Pretoria, 16.12.1901).

Although this document gives information on the activities of the Steinaecker's Horse unit, it also gives an insight into consumer goods of the time. Other information also shows that Steinaecker's Horse made use of livestock from local people for their own purposes (Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 14-15). Chances therefore are quite good that the fowls and ducks were used to supplement the diet of the soldiers.

Wolhuter (1948: 57-59) for instance also indicates how they took possession of a herd of cattle belonging to Abel Erasmus and took it to Sabi Bridge. These were eventually handed over to the officer commanding the outpost at Gomondwane.

The unit also did not have good relationships with some of the local people. Although they were sometimes assisted by the Swazi, some Swazi people were opposed to Steinaecker's Horse because they captured Mancibane, son of Sobhuza I, whom they suspected of pro-Boer sympathies (Matsebula 1972: 87; Bornman 2004:3). In another incident Captain E Holgate had a Swazi executed for allegedly spying (Bornman 2004: 3).

The way in which Bill Sanderson was recruited also indicate that Steinaecker's Horse did not adhere to the strict rules of the British Army. Sanderson decided to stay neutral during the War since he had a large amount of friends and acquaintances among the Boer population and was also a burgher of the Republic. After a short spell on Commando, he was allowed to return to his farm in the Lowveld. However, soon after Steinaecker's Horse had settled in Komatipoort, the Intelligence Department heard that an Englishman (Bill

Sanderson) was stranded amongst the Boers near Legogote and was unable to get away. It was also reported that he possessed cattle and several good horses, which the Boers were likely to make use of. A message was sent to him that a force would be sent to rescue him, to which he replied that it was unnecessary.

This led Steinaecker's Horse to believe that he was a traitor and in contact with the enemy. After establishing that he has been on commando with the Boers, it was decided to remove him by force. Therefore Steinaecker's Horse marched to Legogote where they forced the unwilling Sanderson to pack as much of his household goods as he could onto two wagons, collect his horses, cattle, and other livestock, and take to the road.

The unit was eager to be off, as no one knew at what moment the enemy might appear in force. Their anxiety seemed justified for as they were leaving, shots were fired from the hill above. In the hurry some cattle were left behind and pounced upon by the Boers, who looked on them as spoils of war. The Boers, who were all neighbours, came to the conclusion that Bill Sanderson, whom they looked upon as one of them, had gone over to the British. They therefore cleared up everything that had been left behind, occupied his house and used the corn mill.

Sanderson in the meantime was having a difficult time. He was interrogated regarding his activities in the War, was interned, allotted a camping site in a hot and malaria-stricken spot close to the Lebombo near the Sabie Gorge, and kept there under observation. His best horses and rifles were commandeered, under promise of compensation, which he never received. After the members of Steinaecker's Horse learned that the Boers were using his mill for grinding their corn, they blew up the latter (Bornman 2004: 4-5). He eventually was forced to become a member of Steinaecker's Horse.

Another incident occurred towards the end of the War. Captain Forbes from Steinaecker's Horse attacked a small commando of Boers under command of Commandant Vermaak in Swaziland. Vermaak was killed and the women and children that were with him captured (Matsebula 1972: 90).

At least once members of Steinaecker's Horse also captured foreigners under suspicious circumstances. This led to an investigation by the British Military. The report on this incident includes letters from different members of Steinaecker's Horse. Not only does this give the researcher's insight into the apparent controversial nature of the unit, but also provides the names of some unit members.

In his letter of the incident, the Officer Commanding Steinaecker's Horse, then Major Von Steinaecker, states that 16 foreigners fighting on the side of the Boers, were captured at Nomahash (sic) after they tried to cross the border (NAD: PMO 28, PM 2835/01, Letter from Officer Commanding Steinaecker's Horse to the Commandant of Komatipoort, 01.08.1901). The Officer Commanding the piquet at Signal Hill on the Kalishan Mountain, Lieutenant GF Arran Gore, who captured the enemy, names the following members of the unit: Sergeant-Major Robinson from the Steinaecker's Horse scouts, Captain Webstock and a certain Holgate. He also states that one person was killed in the process of capturing the enemy (NAD: PMO 28, PM 1973/01, Letter from Officer Commanding piquet at Signal Hill to the Officer Commanding Steinaecker's Horse, 13.09.1901). Apart from these names, this is the only outpost other than the headquarters of Steinaecker's Horse at Komatipoort and the post at Sabi Bridge, mentioned in archival records.

Captain HO or D (he signs his name differently in the same document) Webbstock gives the following information in his account of the event. Apparently Captain Gardyne visited the Swazi queen and was told of the seventeen persons trying to cross the border by her. He also mentions Holgate, but includes his rank, being captain (NAD: PMO 28, PM 1973/01, Letter from Captain H.O. or D. Webbstock to Officer Commanding Steinaecker's Horse, 13.09.1901).

Captain JB Holgate was apparently stationed at Sabi Bridge. He writes about the incident from there, but does not include any new information (NAD: PMO 28, PM 1973/01, Letter from Captain J.B. Holgate to Officer Commanding Steinaecker's Horse, 14.09.1901).

From another letter written by Von Steinaecker, it is learned that Sergeant WF Walters also was a member of the unit (NAD: PMO 28, PM 1973/01, Letter from the Officer Commanding Steinaecker's Horse to the Brigade Major at Barberton, 15.10.1901). On the same date the Adjutant of Steinaecker's Horse, Captain ADG Gardyne also wrote a statement regarding the incident, but without providing any new information (NAD: PMO 28, PM 1973/01, Statement by Captain A.D.G. Gardyne, 15.10.1901).

From these documents it is clear that the foreigners were not armed, but that they did not stop when asked to do so. After their capture letters were also written by their consuls to the British as they had apparently got their clearance from the Boers and were all on their way home to their respective countries of origin (NAD, PMO 28, PM 1973/01).

The most important of Steinaecker's Horse's military encounters with the enemy was the Battle of Fort Mpisane, the last of the conventional military actions between Boer and British forces in the Lowveld. It was one of the various forts Von Steinaecker had erected in the Lowveld (Bornman 2004: 2). The battle took place on 7 August 1901 when Boer forces from the Lydenburg Commando under Commandant Piet Moll attacked the fort that was occupied by members of Steinaecker's Horse as well as some local pro-British black people (Skukuza Archives, J Stevenson-Hamilton 1930: 3; Stirling 1907: 274; Bornman 2004: 5).

The British eventually surrendered to the Boers. Although the battle had obviously no effect on the outcome of the Anglo-Boer War, it did seriously damage the operations of Steinaecker's Horse in the region (Pelser 1999: 54-57). During this confrontation the officer in charge of the fort, Captain HF Francis, and many of the Shangane troops, were killed (Bornman 2004: 5).

Lord Roberts also made mention of one of the successes of Steinaecker's Horse. He mentions them capturing 16 Boers trying to cross the border with ammunition from Portuguese territory to Nomahasha on 8 November 1900 (Stirling 1907: 273). This might refer to the above mentioned incident.

At the end of August 1901, a small party of Steinaecker's Horse, under command of Captain Greenhill-Gardyne, captured 11 Boers, some wagons and much stock 150 miles north of Komatipoort. In February 1902, Captain Holgate and 16 men captured 18 Boers on the Swaziland border (Stirling 1907: 275).

After this an extra squadron of Steinaecker's Horse was raised for service in the Pietersburg Lowveld under Colonel Colenbrander. This squadron had one serious engagement with the

enemy on 16 April 1902. Five men were killed and 12 men, including Lieutenant Robertson, were wounded (Stirling 1907: 275).

It has been indicated that Von Steinaecker tried to establish his unit as a permanent border guard after the War. In doing so they posed quite a problem to Stevenson-Hamilton when he started working in what is today known as the Kruger National Park. On 1 August 1902, a few months after the War ended (31 May 1902) the members of Steinaecker's Horse still manned four posts. These consisted of roughly forty white men and 150 natives (Skukuza Archives, Report of the Government Game Reserve, 29.11.1903).

The Steinaecker's Horse unit were only dispersed at the end of 1902. The Customs Department took over their frontier posts as far as the Olifants River (Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 51; 102). In a letter to the Native Commissioner on 6 February 1903, Stevenson-Hamilton again states that Lieutenant-Colonel Steinaecker's corps was still not disbanded (Skukuza archives: Letter from Major J. Stevenson-Hamilton to the Native Commissioner of Lydenburg, 06.02.1903). This was because Steinaecker (unsuccessfully) tried to establish his unit as a permanent border guard.

The corps was however eventually disbanded on 17 February 1903 and replaced by a detachment of the South African Constabulary (Pienaar 1990: 353; Bornman 2004: 5). Diespecker (1996: 101) indicates this date as being 7 February 1903. Since he uses primary sources, it seems likely that this date is the correct one.

Sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse

It has already been mentioned that the main function of the Steinaecker's Horse unit was to act as a border guard, in order to prevent the Boers from making contact with pro-Boer people in the Portuguese territory (Mozambique). For this purpose a number of outposts were established (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998: 8-10). Stirling (1907: 273) indicated that they had more than a dozen permanent posts.

Unfortunately very little is known about the location of these outposts. Twelve of these are shown on a map (Personal communication: B Woolmore), but the scale of the map is too large to give any assistance in physically locating them. Seven of these lie to the south of the Kruger National Park in Swaziland of which two are known to be Nomahasha and Signal Hill on the Kalishan Mountain. Another camp is said to have been 96 km south of Komatipoort (Diespecker 1996: 99). Four of these are located within the boundaries of the Park and one is at Komatipoort, which was their headquarters after moving it from Nomahasha (Cattrick 1959: 180; Diespecker 2000: 4).

The four sites in the Park probably are (from south to north) the site of Sardelli's shop at Gomondwane, the Gaza Gray outpost or the site where Bill Sanderson was interned, Muntshu at the northern bank of Mlondozi Spruit west of Metsi-Metsi mouth and the site at Sabi Bridge (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003a: 15-18, 20-23).

From other sources some other sites in the Kruger National Park were also identified. These are KaNwamuriwane, Bottelkop at the northern bank of the Crocodile River close to the confluence with the Komati River, Outspan, a temporary outpost close to Nwanedzi called Ngotsomouth and the Northernmost (Letaba or Makhadzi) outpost (Pienaar 1990: 345; Personal comment: U de V Pienaar). Another known site is that of Fort Mpisane at

Bushbuckridge just west of the Park (Pienaar 1990: 345). Woolmore (2006: 74) also mentions a post named Kilo 104. This brings the total of Steinaecker's Horse sites to nineteen of which ten are located within the boundaries of the Kruger National Park.

Some old piquets are indicated on a map drawn by Stevenson-Hamilton in 1903 (Skukuza archives: J. Stevenson-Hamilton, Game preservation document, 13.10.1903). It is possible that this map is not very accurate. In this case it could provide (inaccurate) information on the location of some of Steinaecker's Horse's outposts.

By using this and two other historical maps and other information, eleven of the sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse could be identified. The site mentioned above close to the Makhadzi Spruit, was the first one to be physically located and since no specific information regarding it was found in historical records, it was decided to do archaeological excavations on the site (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998, 2001, 2003b). From this it was found that most of the dateable artefacts found at the site represent the period of the Late 19th to the early 20th century. The radiocarbon dates from the site coincide with this period, namely 1900, proving that the site was occupied during the Anglo-Boer War (Personal communication: S Woodborne).

The second site is that of the unit's headquarters at Komatipoort. It became the headquarters of Steinaecker's Horse after the British occupied the Lowveld. A corrugated iron blockhouse was built here (Pienaar 1990: 343). However there also were other British military units stationed at Komatipoort, such as the Royal Scots Fusiliers who had established their camp on the Lebombo (Greenhill-Gardyne 1972: 2450).

The site known as Sardelli's shop is close to Gomondwane and north of Malelane. Sardelli the Greek, who also was a member of Steinaecker's Horse, used the site between 1892 and 1899. The shop was made of corrugated iron. It was used by Steinaecker's Horse during the War as a base with Captain EG (Gaza) Gray as the officer in command of this large outpost also called Gomondwane (Pienaar 1990: 398, 460, 619; Personal comment: U de V Pienaar; Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 28).

Captain Gray used the Gaza Gray outpost between 1899 and 1902. He used it mainly to keep his cattle in a kraal (Pienaar 1990: 618). The site is situated to the south of the Lower Sabie rest camp. With him on the site stayed some natives who kept dogs, poultry, goats, sheep and donkeys. Stevenson-Hamilton (1952: 29) described this camp as existing of half a dozen round huts or rondavels enclosed with a neatly made fence.

Wolhuter was placed in charge of a picket at Ngomandwane with twenty men attached to him (Wolhuter 1948: 62). It is not certain whether this is the same outpost as the mentioned one at Gomondwane. He describes how they went to bathe and swim in the nearby pool (three or four miles from the Crocodile River) and that they did not have much more to do than this and drinking rum.

The place where Bill Sanderson was interned is a site near Matjozeni, north of the Gaza Gray outpost, but south of Lower Sabie. Bill Sanderson was an English-speaking farmer who decided to stay neutral during the War. Because of this he was interned by Steinaecker's Horse at this site in 1901, after which he joined the unit. The site was an old shop made of corrugated iron and was also owned by Sardelli.

Muntshe is described as an outpost of Steinaecker's Horse during 1900-1902. The site is probably to the north or northwest of Muntshokop, north of Lower Sabie (Pienaar 1990: 346-347, 617; Personal communication U de V Pienaar).

KaNwamuriwane is a site consisting of trenches and is situated against the eastern slope of the KaNwamuriwane Mountain close to Tshokwane. Steinaecker's Horse used the site during 1901 (Pienaar 1990: 617). Apparently the black members of the unit manned the site in order to guard the Nwaswitsontso Poort (Personal communication: U de V Pienaar).

The battle at Fort Mpisane has already been mentioned. The site is situated at Bushbuckridge, east of the farm New Forest. It was placed under command of Captain HF (Farmer) Francis. The garrison consisted of 30 men,³ but the local followers of chief Mpisane were also armed (Pienaar 1990: 348). During the battle Captain Francis was killed and he was buried next to the fort. Some of the black troops that were killed were buried in a trench to the southeast of the fort (Pelser 1999: 57).

Bottelkop is an observation post on the south-western slope of a hill at Komatipoort, inside the border of the Kruger National Park. The site consists of fortification walls.

Outspan is a campsite used by Steinaecker's Horse during 1901. It is situated to the east of Pretoriuskop and south of Shitlhave (Pienaar 1990: 345, 618, 620).

Pienaar (1990: 353) also talks of an outpost close to the Olifants River. This might be a site at Ngotsomouth that was located recently. Incidentally, the name of the Ngotso River was given by Harry Wolhuter and was named after his black guide, Ingotso, on one of his trips through this area (Wolhuter 1948: 45).

It seems as if the Kilo 104 post is situated outside of boundaries of the Kruger National Park. It may be within the Sabi Sand Game Reserve. The post was only manned by 6 soldiers. They made use of two railway carriages as shelter and store (Woolmore 2006: 74).

Lastly, Steinaecker's Horse had a large post at Sabi Bridge where they had a camp and erected a blockhouse at the eastern side of the southern end of the temporary bridge (Cartwright n.d.: 1).

The Sabi Bridge post

Captain (later Major) AW Greenhill-Gardyne, the adjutant of Colonel Von Steinaecker, was placed in command of the garrison at Sabi Bridge. Major R Robertson also was in command of this garrison for a short time (Pienaar 1990: 343-349; Personal communication: U de V Pienaar). This is the site that is currently being investigated by archaeological excavations.

They occupied the site since 1900 and between 1901 and 1902 operated the train between Komatipoort and Kilo 104, approximately 21 miles north of the Sabie River. The railway bridge was not yet completed, but a temporary wooden bridge on a diversion line was used. This bridge was swept away during a flood in 1901. Trooper Tom Boyd was the driver until his death on 2 July 1902. The job was then taken over by Trooper Clinkers Willis (Woolmore 2006: 18).

³ The names of only 25 of these are known, as indicated earlier.

After September 1902 the blockhouse at the site (south of the temporary bridge) was used by Major J Stevenson-Hamilton as his office, when he started working as the first warden of the Park (Skukuza Archives, Stevenson-Hamilton 1930: 7; Skukuza Archives, photo album nos. 1, 4 & 5; Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 55-56). It had a veranda which was pleasant and cool, with a direct river frontage. The most important reason for having a blockhouse here would be that the Sabi train bridge had to be protected against attacks from the Boers. This was one of a number of reasons why blockhouses were erected (Van Vollenhoven 1995: 87). Guarding the Sabi railway bridge and probably also the railway line therefore must have been part of their duties.

Stevenson-Hamilton (1952: 16) also describes that there were several old huts made of boiler plates and rondavels or improved native huts at the site. He also indicates that the camp was encircled by a dense thorn scherm. Stevenson-Hamilton (1952: 55) further indicates that Von Steinaecker ordered that the store-room, stable and several other buildings be demolished and that all the corrugated iron and other removables be taken away. Apparently the blockhouse also was to be pulled down, but fortunately for him time did not avail.

Contribution of Steinaecker's Horse to the establishment of the Kruger National Park

It is necessary to end this section on the history of the unit with the emphasis on the important role the unit played in the establishment of the Kruger National Park. The Steinaecker's Horse unit and some of its members greatly influenced the history of the Park. It can indeed be stated that the unit's most enduring legacy is the important role that some of its members played in the establishment of the Park.

At the Sabi Bridge post they erected a block house at the southern end of the temporary bridge (Stevenson-Hamilton 1930: 7; S.A. National Museum of Military History: 920; Cartwright n.d.: 1). This post seems to have been their largest outpost, with only their Komatipoort headquarters being bigger. It is therefore this unit who started using this site which later on became the headquarters of the Kruger National Park, today known as Skukuza. The first warden of the park, Major J Stevenson-Hamilton, used the blockhouse as an office after September 1902 (Skukuza Archives, Stevenson-Hamilton 1930: 7). Unfortunately nothing seems to be left of this blockhouse and the camp associated with it.

Although the battle at Fort Mpisane had no influence on the War, it did have an influence on the outcome of the history of the park. Captain Francis, the commanding officer at the fort was killed in the battle (Skukuza Archives, Stevenson-Hamilton 1930: 7). Only five days before the battle he wrote a letter in which he stated that he was interested in the position of ranger for the park, for which he was recommended. He also wrote that he had much success in stopping the black people from hunting, especially close to Steinaecker's Horse's outposts (Skukuza Archives, letter 02.08.1901).

The last mentioned remark refers to the indiscriminate hunting activities some of the members of the unit were involved in. Subsequently the second-in-command of Steinaecker's Horse, Major A Greenhill-Gardyne, wrote a report about the preservation of the wildlife in the area. Not only did this report put an end to these practises since it clearly stated rules to the members of Steinaecker's Horse to stop them from the indiscriminate hunting of wildlife, but it was also used as a guide when the Park was started after the Anglo

Boer War (Skukuza Archives, report 03.06.1902). In fact, Stevenson-Hamilton relied heavily on this document in establishing principles for the preservation of wildlife in the area.

When the unit started operating in this area, they had a negative effect on the wildlife, because of the mentioned indiscriminate hunting. According to Major Stevenson-Hamilton's report for 1903 the members of Steinaecker's Horse "...got their meat almost entirely from the game which they shot." (Skukuza Archives, report 29.11.1903). He also stated that all the natives that were employed by Steinaecker's Horse were armed with Martini Henry rifles and that they were killing animals more irresponsibly than the white men.

The members of the unit however did stop the local black people from hunting in their vicinity and in the neighbourhood of Sabi Bridge. Species such as (blue) wildebeest, impala, zebra and warthog are mentioned and he stated that in some areas some of the antelopes were almost completely exterminated. These practices ended only during the first half of 1903 when most of the people concerned had left the park (Skukuza Archives, report 29.11.1903).

Some of the members of Steinaecker's Horse were later employed as game rangers in the park as they knew the area and the local people well. Major James Stevenson-Hamilton, first warden of the park, indeed stated this in his annual report for 1902 as a pre-requisite for becoming a ranger (Skukuza Archives, Annual report, 1902). These included EG (Gaza) Gray - appointed 12 August 1902 (Skukuza Archives, List of Rangers, 1902-1903; Cattrick 1959: 183), HC (Harry) Wolhuter - appointed 15 August 1902 (Skukuza Archives, Staff of the Government Game Reserve, 1904; Cattrick 1959: 183) and SH (Harold) Trollope - Ranger of Malelane between 1925 and 1928 (Skukuza Archives, unnumbered photograph; Pienaar 1990: 347) .

The information on this unit also shows that it frequently made use of members of the local black community as servants. The excavations at the outpost close to Letaba suggest that these people stayed with the members of Steinaecker's Horse at the sites. It also is not impossible that members of some of the black military units, such as the Native Police and Black Watch, were present at the different outposts manned by Steinaecker's Horse.

Members of the Native Police were also employed by the Park as game watchers after the War (Skukuza Archives, list of Native Police or watchers, 1902-1903). This probably was a result of their knowledge of the area, which they obtained while working with the Steinaecker's Horse unit.

The second-in-command of Steinaecker's Horse, Major A.D. Greenhill-Gardyne, only became a member of Steinaecker's Horse after joining them on a patrol between Komatipoort and Sabi Bridge which offered him the opportunity for hunting. He originally was a member of the Gordon Highlanders (Greenhill-Gardyne 1972: 246). He wrote a report about the preservation of the wild life in the area, which was used as a guide when the park was started. He also stated that clear rules were set out to the members of Steinaecker's Horse to stop them from indiscriminate hunting of wild life (Skukuza archives: Report by Major A. Greenhill-Gardyne, 03.06.1902). This document and the experience former members of the unit brought to the park in the early years, is witness to the important role it played in the history of the Lowveld and the establishment of the Kruger National Park.

7.3 The railway line

The Eastern line

The first proposal for a railway link between the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) and Delagoa Bay were made in 1866 by Alexander McCorkindale. Although this was approved by the ZAR Government nothing came of the plan as McCorkindale died in May 1871 (Bornman 2004: 1).

After this GP Moodie tried to establish a rail link from Delagoa Bay to the ZAR and obtained a concession in 1873. This however expired the following year without any progress being made (Bornman 2004: 1).

The Government appointed President TF Burgers in October 1874 to enter into discussions with the Portuguese Government regarding the construction of a railway from Lourenco Marques (Maputo) to the border of the ZAR and to raise a loan of £300 000 in Europe (Bornman 2004: 1).

He obtained the services of RT Hall to survey a railway from Delagoa Bay to the foot of the Drakensberg. Hall made the survey in May 1875, but deviated from the route. It came through the Lebombo Range at the Mbuluzi Gorge, across the Swaziland Lowveld, terminating at a meeting point with the Holnek Road which entered the Swazi country at Oshoek. He recommended that a route should also be surveyed from the last point to Klipstapel (Breyten), to bring the proposed line onto the upper Highveld (Bornman 2004: 1).

Burgers obtained the necessary financial support in the Netherlands for the project, resulting in the establishment of the Lebombo Railway Company in 1876 (Woolmore 2006: 14; Bornman 2004: 1). The contract for building the railway line was assigned to a Belgian firm, 'Société Cockerill', but when the rails arrived at the Delagoa Bay harbour in 1877, the ZAR was annexed by Britain and the Lebombo Railway Company was dissolved (Bornman 2004: 1).

After the ZAR became independent again in 1881, President Paul Kruger continued with the arrangements for the building of the railway line. The Administrator for Mozambique, General Joachim José Machado, who also was a surveyor, arrived at Pretoria with a survey for the railway between Lourenco Marques (Maputo) and the border of the ZAR near Komatipoort. This resulted in the survey for the Transvaal portion of the projected railway also being entrusted to him (Bornman 2004: 1).

The plan was to build the railway line in two stages, the first from the Portuguese border via Pretoriuskop to the foot of the Drakensberg from where goods could be transported safely further by ox-wagon, without fear of tsetse fly. The second section was to be built to Pretoria as soon as finances allowed (Bornman 2004: 1).

The concession to build the railway line from Delagoa Bay to the Portuguese Border was granted to an American, Eduard McMurdo on 14 December 1883. Consequently the Delagoa Bay and East African Railway Company was established (Woolmore 2006: 14; Bornman 2004: 1). The railway engineers commenced surveying the route on the ZAR side as proposed by General Machado during April and May 1884. On 12 and 13 August 1884

the government drafted an agreement with the 'Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorweg-Maatskappij' (NZASM or ZASM) (Bornman 2004: 1-2).

McMurdo however experienced financial difficulties and was only able to commence construction of the line from Delagoa Bay on 5 March 1887. The chief construction engineer was Sir Thomas Tancred and some 200 Europeans and 3 000 Africans were recruited to build the 90 km long Portuguese section of the line which was completed on 14 December 1887. One of the groups of people employed were deserters from the British Army known as the Irish Brigade. They were notorious in the Barberton area and for wrecking Eureka City in 1886 (Bornman 2004: 2).

The ZASM was established on 21 June 1887 with the construction of the line on the Portuguese side. A concession was granted to the company Groll and Maarschalk of Leyden. RAI Snethlage, the chief engineer, was sent to South Africa to investigate the route of the proposed line and thereafter JL Cluysenaar made the necessary arrangements with the government for the building of the line (Bornman 2004: 2).

On 5 December 1888 the Delagoa Bay and East African Railway Co. completed the building of the line on the Portuguese side, up to what was believed to be the border of the ZAR, but it was found to be 9 km short. The contractors refused to extend the line which led to a court case resulting in the delaying of the construction of the junction with the Transvaal. The Portuguese appropriated the line and completed it (Bornman 2004: 3).

After the settlement in the court case between the Portuguese government and McMurdo in 1891, the line reached the ZAR. The railway bridge across the Komati River was completed at the end of May 1891 and the railhead reached Komatipoort station on 1 July 1891, Hectorspruit on 1 October, Malalane (now Malelane) on 28 December and Kaapmuiden on 10 March 1892 (Bornman 2004: 3).

George Paulding was awarded the revised concession for the portion of the line along the Crocodile River to Crocodile Gorge. The line was completed to Crocodile Gorge in twelve months, but 127 people had died of fever and 500 transport donkeys were lost to the tsetse fly or eaten by lions (Bornman 2004: 3).

The first locomotive entered Nelspruit station on 20 June 1892. According to the contract, the ZASM was allowed 5 years in order to raise the necessary capital to continue with the railway line (Bornman 2004: 3). Work recommenced on the line from Pretoria to the east and from Nelspruit to the west simultaneously by 1893 (Woolmore 2006: 14; Bornman 2004: 3). Construction reached Waterval-Onder on 20 January 1894 (Bornman 2004: 3).

Construction engineers were faced with exceptionally difficult terrain between Waterval-Onder and Waterval-Boven due to the gradient of the slopes along the mountain. In order not to have an extensive detour of the line, it was decided to provide a gradient of one in twenty over a distance of 3,4 km, with a tunnel 71,6 metres in length. Although this gradient is not insurmountable for light trains with normal locomotives, the question of safety and economy had to be considered. Therefore this section was provided with a rack which consisted of two channel section beams with steel rack teeth fitted between them and spaced 100 mm apart and arranged to engage the gear wheel of the rack engine (Bornman 2004: 3).

The rail reached Machadodorp on 10 July 1894 and Belfast in the same year. The first train from Pretoria travelled to Eerste Fabrieken on 13 May 1894 and on 15 October went as far as Bronkhorstspuit. By this time the line from the east had passed Balmoral. On 20 October 1894 the first test train from the east reached Pretoria and on 2 November 1894 President Paul Kruger ceremoniously tightened the last bolt in the line at Wilgerivier, 11 km east of Bronkhorstspuit (Bornman 2004: 3). The railway line was therefore completed in 1894 (Kruger National Park n.d.: 4).

The line was commissioned for the first full service on 1 January 1895 and on 8 July 1895 it was officially declared open by President Paul Kruger (Jones 1996: 1; Bornman 2004: 3). The Delagoa Bay - Pretoria Railway could have been opened earlier, had it not been for the many delays including fever and the shortage of capital (Bornman 2004: 3).

The Selati line

During 1887 the prospector French Bob moved from the Barberton area to the Northern Transvaal to prospect for gold. He discovered gold in the Murchison Mountains, near Gravelotte. This became known as the Selati Goldfields. News reached the outside world very soon and resulted in many fortune hunters and swindlers converging on the area. A camp was established here in 1890 and named Leydsdorp, after Dr WJ Leyds, State Secretary of the ZAR (Bornman 2004: 4).

As the Eastern Line was being constructed from Komatipoort to Pretoria in 1891, it was evident that the Soutpansberg also needed fast transport to both Lourenco Marques (Maputo) harbour and the central markets of the country (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 4). The discovery of gold and the needs of the gold mines of the Selati Goldfields in the districts of Gravelotte, Leydsdorp and Rubbervale, prompted the Volksraad (Parliament) to approve a railway line to the north (Woolmore 2006: 17; Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 4). It was decided that the Soutpansberg was to be linked with the Eastern Line via the Selati Goldfields. The name Selati is derived from Chief Shalati, who lived near this river in the region of Ofcolaco. The proposed route, from Komatipoort in the south to Zoekmekeer in the north, passed through untamed bushveld with almost no habitation (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 4).

In 1890 the concession for this line was given to a member of the First Volksraad (high house of parliament) of the ZAR, Barend J Vorster jnr. who apparently bribed other members into awarding it to him. He then formed the Selati Railway Company. He was paid £ 9 600 per mile and immediately subletted the contract for an amount of £ 7 002 per mile without having done any work (Woolmore 2006: 18).

The subcontractor was a Frenchman, Eugene Oppenheim, who received the concession to construct the railway line on 6 June 1891. Komatipoort was still only a station with very few inhabitants, mainly due to malaria and tsetse fly. However it now came to life when a miscellaneous crowd of sub-contractors and employees, traders etc. came to the area. Oppenheim allocated the actual construction contract to the engineering company Westwood and Winby and construction began in 1893. The first 40 km was completed by July of that year (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 4).

The project unfortunately got off to a bad start. Oppenheim managed to swindle an amount of one million pounds from the Government's coffers by means of faulty entries and other

irregularities (Woolmore 2006: 17; Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 4). The Railway Commissioner, JS Smit, became aware of these irregularities and uncovered Oppenheim's 'big swindle', which immediately placed the Government in a very bad light (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 4-5).

After 120 km of track had been laid, the 'Big Railway Scandal', as it was headlined in 1894, brought all work on the Selati line to an abrupt stop at the Sabie River (Woolmore 2006: 18; Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 5). The then uncompleted Sabi Bridge later became known as 'Reserve', named after the Sabi Game Reserve, today known as Skukuza. Oppenheim eventually fled the country and the concession was withdrawn (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 5). The incomplete line ran from Komatipoort to a point known as Kilo 104, about 21 miles north of the Sabi River (Woolmore 2006: 18).

The outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) was responsible for another delay, although the completed section briefly attained military importance in 1900. The ZAR Government used the completed section to the Sabi Bridge to organise and store its rolling stock, as it was ideally situated away from the advancing British forces. Towards the end of the war the British managed to get control of the line, but after the end of the war the Selati line still remained uncompleted for a few more years (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 5).

Only after the Union of South Africa came into being in 1910 and the three railway administrations (Cape, Natal and Central Railways) amalgamated to form the South African Railways, work on the Selati line started again. The contract was awarded to Pauling & Company and by 1912 the line reached Tzaneen (Woolmore 2006: 18; Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 5). In 1915 it was completed to Zoekmekeer. The inaugural ceremony was held on 25 October 1912, starting at Komatipoort with festivities at all major stops (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 5).

The Selati Goldfields came to an end, placing a burden on the economic viability of the line. This led to a promotional drive which included the very popular roundabout through Eastern and Northern Transvaal, called "Round in 9 days". In 1925 the first of these tourist train journeys took place, starting at Johannesburg station with stops at all the bigger towns and Lourenço Marques (Maputo) and ending again in Johannesburg 9 days later. The highlight of the tour was the section through the Kruger National Park with a camp fire concert at Huhla station, near Reserve (Skukuza). Vehicles were specially brought in from Nelspruit to take passengers on game drives (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 5).

The Kruger National Park was officially proclaimed in 1926. The line was now also used to bring provisions and material to the Park (Kruger National Park n.d.: 6).

As a result of agricultural and industrial development traffic gradually increased (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 6). Apart from the costs involved in maintaining the line, more and more wild animals were killed as a result thereof. It was therefore decided to divert the line to outside the Park (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 6). It remained in service until it was diverted along the western boundary of the Park to Kaapmuiden, where it now joins the Eastern Line (Bornman 2004: 4). In 1972 the last train travelled through the Park. It was drawn by steam engine No 3638. This locomotive was donated to the Park in October 1978 by the SAR Administration and stands at Skukuza as a

monument to the rail builders of yesteryear (Bornman 2004: 4; Kruger National Park n.d.: 6).

This railway line between Komatipoort and Sabi Bridge was however also used by Steinaecker's Horse on a weekly basis during the War (Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 28).

8. The excavations

No grid was laid out over the site as specific features were to be excavated. Six datum points were however established during the 2005 excavation season in order to serve as reference for mapping the site (see figure 3). The GPS measurements of these points were taken for future reference. Datum point F is a permanent marker on site that was probably placed there along with others by the SA National Parks. This marker serves as permanent reference for future mapping of the site.

The GPS measurements are as follows:

A – 24°59'17"S; 31°35'53"E; 259m

B – 24°59'16"S; 31°35'53"E; 254m

C – 24°59'19"S; 31°35'52"E; 248m

D – 24°59'18"S; 31°35'53"E; 256m

E – 24°59'19"S; 31°35'53"E; 248m

F – 24°59'19"S; 31°35'54"E; 257m

Due to certain constraints, such as thick bushes, it was however necessary to establish additional datum points. G, H and I were established during 2006 only to make it easier to do measurements for drawing excavations. The GPS measurement thereof is:

G – 24°59'18"S; 31°35'53"E; 265m

H - 24°59'11"S; 31°35'53"E; 270m

I - 24° 59' 16"s; 31°35'53"E; 255m

Datum point J was established as another permanent reference point inside of excavation 9 and is related to I, due to its close proximity thereto. The reason for an additional reference point was that I had to be removed as it posed danger to the wildlife in the area, whereas J could be placed right against a tree. The GPS measurement thereof is:

J - 24°59'15"S; 31°35'53"E; 252m

Only one additional datum point was established during 2007. Datum point K was necessary in order to make mapping easier with reference to excavation 13 as this excavation was reasonably far from the others. The GPS measurement for this point is:

K - 24°59'15"S; 31°35'51"E; 265m

Six excavations were conducted during 2005 and an additional six were excavated during 2006. These can be summarised as follows:

Excavation 1 – area with cultural material (store room) on the northern side of the site

Excavation 2 – a platform made from stones on the eastern side of the site

Excavation 3 and 7 – area with cultural material (hut or wind shelter) close to the Sabie River

Excavation 4 and 8 – a similar structure close to the Sabie River

Excavation 5, 6, 11 and 12 – different excavations on a large refuse midden to the southeast of the site

Excavation 9 – remains of a structure to the east of the one at excavation 1

Excavation 10 – remains of a building just south of the centre of the site

During the 2007 excavation season the last two excavations were extended, but no new numbers were allocated to these. One additional excavation, excavation 13, was done on an area with stones to the northwest of excavation 1.

No cultural material was collected from the surface during 2007.

8.1 Structures

8.1.1 Excavation 9

The excavation was started in 2006 as a trench measured out in a north-south direction with sides of 7 x 1 m. It was however extended frequently as more of the structure became visible. In the end it was a large excavation with an irregular shape.

It was done on a large heap of soil which included clay debris and other cultural material. The structure is in close proximity and to the northeast of the one at excavation 1. The aim was to investigate the heap and to determine if it was a structure as well as to identify the function thereof.

Loose soil and vegetation were removed at first and the artefacts lying on the surface was labelled as part of layer 1. Only one layer was excavated, but the depth thereof varied considerably. On the edge of the excavation it was 2 cm deep, but closer to the middle of the heap it was 50 cm deep.

At first the soil was a bit ashy and had a greyish brown colour. It is believed that this is the result of veld fires. Signs of termite activity were also visible, especially close to the southern part of the excavation, where the remains of clay bricks were found. Overall the soil was brown, but where bricks were found it had a more reddish colour. The central part of the excavation was greyish and burnt patches were also identified.

More or less in the centre of the excavation the remains of a few bricks were found lying on their side. This looked like part of a wall that collapsed to the inside of the structure and was left on a control pillar inside of the excavation in order to see if it made sense with other things found in the excavation. The pillar was in the end 0,5 m high and also 0,5 m from what seemed to be the side of the structure (indicated by a burned wooden beam).

At the end of the 2006 excavation season it seemed as if the structure was rectangular and that it had four wooden beams (all burnt) on top indicating the perimeters of the structure. From two of these samples were taken in order to do C¹⁴ dating. At this stage it was believed that the beams rested on at least two brick pillars, one on the western and one on the eastern corner of the structure. It was not yet clear how the beams were supported on the other two corners. A large metal bracket was found at three of the corners. This seems to have been used to tie the two beams, meeting at each corner together. At the fourth corner (the southern one) the head of a pick was found. It seems as if this might have been use for the same purpose although this has to be investigated further.

As time did not permit the completion of the excavation, it was extended during 2007. On completion of the 2006 excavation season the excavation was covered by plastic sails and the soil thrown on top thereof. This enabled the excavators to save time in reopening it during the 2007 season (figure 4-6).

The extended excavation 9 was made into a square with sides of 8 m (figure 7). The purpose thereof was to further investigate the structure partially unearthed during 2006. As the excavation was extended, all artefacts found were still marked as being part of layer 1.

The excavation was deepened inside of the four beams in order to find a floor. However outside of the structure the excavation was done in order to find clues on interpreting the structure. Much attention was also given to defining the areas with bricks in order to interpret it as part of the structure.

In between the beams the soil was extremely ashy, very fine and with a greyish colour. It later became grainy sand with a white colour. It is therefore believed that the area did not have a floor and that this sand might have been brought from the river to form a 'floor'. The level was measured and it was already 4 cm deeper than that of a stone floor unearthed on the outside of this area.

The depth of the excavation inside of the beams varied due to the natural slope from northeast to southwest. It was measured 51 cm on the east, 32 cm on the north, 29 cm at the west and 20,5 cm at the south. The pillar with bricks on top of it was left in situ. This represents the height of the heap of soil before excavation. The depth here was 65 cm.

Outside of the structure the soil was dark brown, although it was more reddish right against the bricks. This was a result of the deterioration of bricks and clay. The soil was sandy and a bit finer than the white soil mentioned above. The depth of the excavation sloped gradually from the centre and as a result of the slope of the area it differed. On the southwestern side it measured 7 cm, on the northwest 1 cm on the northeast 2 cm and on the southeast 4 cm.

The rectangular area between the beams was found to be sterile, but artefacts were found on the outside of this. Apart from what was already mentioned above, this included a fourth bracket (at the fourth corner), metal pegs and the remains of a shovel (figure 8-9). Two crowbars were found against the brick wall to the east (figure 10). A string of copper wire was found next to the beam on the north. It seems as if it was used as some kind of conductor as it was tied onto a metal plate and then almost stretched over the length of this beam. On the southern side and on the edge of the excavation, a small floor packed with medium sized granite stones was found. The hoop of a wooden barrel was also found in close proximity to this floor (figure 11).

During the 2007 excavations it was possible to decrease the size of the control pillar inside of the ashy area so that only the bricks remained on top thereof. This consisted of four rows of bricks (although some of these only contained one brick). These seem to have been mortared together with dark brown soil, limestone and small stones. The north-south axis thereof represents height and is 41 cm whilst the east-west axis represents the width thereof and also measures 41 cm. Each brick is 9,5 cm wide, 23,5 cm long and 3 cm thick. It therefore rather gives the impression of being tiles than bricks.

The way in which the bricks lie gives the impression that it was part of a wall that collapsed to the inside of the structure and that it fell from the north. The distance between the bricks and the three 'walls' closest thereto were also measured in order to see if this gives an indication of where the bricks originated from. This also seems to support the theory that the bricks fell from the north. From the eastern side it measured 1,185 m. From the northern side it was 68,5 cm and from the western wall it measured 1,38 m. However it became clear after excavation that no brick wall existed on the northern and western side and one can therefore only assume that it fell from the east. This would mean that the bricks were mortared vertically as opposed to the usual horizontal way.

In the end it was clear that the excavated structure was rectangular consisting of two brick walls on the eastern and southern side and two large wooden beams on the northern and western side. Smaller pieces of wood were used to complete the rectangle. All of these showed severe burning and is the reason why at first it was believed that there are four wooden beams. Each of the corners and sides of the rectangle needs to be described separately.

At the north-eastern corner the beam on the northern side met the brick wall on the eastern side. Apart from the bracket mentioned above, five large spikes were also found (figure 12-13). On the photographs one can see that there runs a clay curb from the wall further to the outside of the structure. This gave the impression that a clay floor might exist here, but nothing could be found. To the eastern side of the excavation a number of roof screws and washers were found in line. This gave the impression that a lean-to might have been erected against this corner and the eastern wall.

The brick wall on the eastern side was curved with the convex side to the inside. It was made out of proper burnt bricks (figure 14). Although time did not permit the proper definition thereof it looks as if two bricks were laid next to each other to form the width of the wall and at was at least five bricks high (figure 15-17). The size of the individual bricks was 22 cm long, 7,5 cm wide and 11 cm high. The wall was approximately 30 cm wide as it also contained the clay mortar in between. The southern side of this eastern side of the structure could not be clearly defined due to a tree growing thereon. It is possible that the bricks continued to the south-eastern corner, but it may also be consisting of loose bricks and clay. The irregular shape in this area gives the impression of some kind of entrance, but this may be a result of the said tree.

The inside of the wall clearly shows another two wooden beams which might be the base of the wall (figure 18-19). These are however not as large as the ones at the north and west of the ashy area. The thick layer of ash on the inside of the structure is clearly visible underneath this beam. The remains of two wooden posts were also found. This indicates that the beam was kept in place by them and that the brick wall was erected against and slightly on top of these beams.

The only indication of the height of the wall would be to calculate different measurement taken during the excavations. Three measurements need to be added together. Firstly the remainder of the wall is five bricks high. as the individual bricks are 11 cm high, this means at least 55 cm, but one could add about 1 cm of mortar in between rows giving a total of 59 cm. Secondly one needs to add the distance between the wall and the bricks found on the control pillar. This is 1,185 m. The last measurement to be added is the size of the bricks on the control pillar, which is 41 cm. It therefore seems as if the wall was at least 2,185 m high.

There however do remain two unanswered questions. Firstly what happened to the bricks representing the distance of 1,185 m between the wall and the control pillar and secondly if there were no bricks, where does the bricks on the control pillar originate from? One possible explanation is that there was an opening, perhaps to create something like an entrance (similar to what one would find in an oven).

It has been indicated that two crow bars were found against the eastern wall. These had a diameter of 2,7 cm. A piece of metal and burnt wood was also found in close proximity to the wall.

At the south-eastern corner the two different brick walls meet. Unfortunately this corner was damaged by the indicated tree and therefore one can not clearly identify the exact nature thereof (figure 20-22). It looks as if the proper bricks from the eastern wall gradually turn to small pieces of bricks, similar to those found in the southern wall. Apart from the pick found here, another bracket and five spikes were found. Broken pieces of gin bottles and metal pieces were also found.

The wall on the south was made from small bricks (figure 23-24). These seem to be nothing more than very soft sun dried pieces of rubble. An unevenly shaped floor was unearthed on this side as well as the hoop indicated earlier (figure 25-26).

This brick wall met the wooden beam on the western side at the south-western corner (figure 27-28). The way the bricks were distributed at this corner, at first gave the impression that it was a pillar, but it is now believed that it is a nothing more than the result of the way the wall collapsed. Again a metal bracket and five spikes were identified at this corner.

On the western side the structure only had a large wooden beam (figure 29). As indicated earlier the beam was severely burnt.

The two wooden beams from the western and northern sides met at the northwestern corner (figure 30). In this case it was clear that the metal bracket was driven into both beams in order to keep it together. In this case four metal spikes were found here as well as a string of copper wire. The photograph gives the impression of a furnace used for iron working, but this may be a mere result of the degradation of the beams. It also looks as if this could be the point where the bellows were placed to stoke the fire.

The second large wooden beam formed the northern side of the structure. It was also severely burnt (figure 31). Apart from the mentioned shovelhead found here some large pieces of metal plate (very brittle) was also unearthed. The copper wire found at the northwestern corner also run along this side. In some cases it was attached to metal plates via typical roof screws. A small piece of about 2 cm of isolation material was found around the wire.

In the end the conclusion derived was that the structure was not a building, and the rectangle a fireplace/ furnace around which certain blacksmith activities took place (figure 32-35). It seems as if each corner was a different working station with the fire made within the central rectangle. The walls and beams had the function of containing the fire inside.

The north-eastern corner and southern wall look as if they were where the main activities took place. It is possible that the curved wall on the east was some kind of entrance to the

furnace, but further research is necessary to confirm this. Of course it might be nothing more than just a wall built to erect the lean-to. The lean-to seems to have covered the northeaster corner as well as most of the eastern wall.

The crowbars have the same measurements as the brackets. It can be stated that similar tools were used to manufacture the brackets. Even the spikes seem to have a similar diameter and may have been made from these. The spikes are similar to railway spikes used in the railway track close to the site. It is therefore concluded that the blacksmith work for the building of the railway was done on site and that this structure is rather related to this than to Steinaecker's Horse. However, work to the railway line was done before and after the Anglo-Boer War. Therefore one may assume that it was also used by the soldiers.

The stone floor on the southern side was probably laid to prevent a mess when working with water. It is presumed that this was an area where the blacksmith cooled off the metal. A barrel with water was probably placed on the floor for this purpose. The hoop found in close proximity to the floor may be the remains of such a barrel.

It is clear that some activities had to occur at all the other corners as this is where the brackets and spikes were found. This might have to do with the final hammering and forging of these pieces of hardware. It should however not be forgotten that the brackets might have been part of the construction of this structure.

The northwestern corner may have been the place from which the fire was stoked, but if this was an open fire, this could have happened from anywhere. The soil around this corner and on the northern and western side was somewhat grey in comparison to the other areas surrounding the structure which may be an indication of this. If the beams were indeed lifted from the ground and were found in a collapsed state this would certainly have been a possibility. This is one of the aspects that need further research. The shovel found on the northern side again seems to corroborate with this side (and the northwestern corner) being the used for stoking.

The copper wire is the aspect least likely to be explained. It may also have something to do with igniting the furnace, but this does not seem very likely as there must have been many and easier ways to do this. It is suggested that this might have been some kind of triggering device for explosives similar to what was used frequently during the Anglo Boer War to blow up the railway track. Of course this technology would also have been available a few years before and after the war. It might have been used to blow up the blacksmith area after it had served its purpose. One also needs to remember that Von Steinaecker demolishes some of the structures on this site after realising that his corps was not to become a permanent border guard. It is therefore not unreasonable to suggest that he blew up this structure.

Cultural material found here included ceramics, glass, metal, unidentifiable fragments of bone, clay fragments and other building rubble, stone objects that may have been used in the process of working metal (anvils, hammers, grinding stones) and the remains of wood.

8.1.2 Excavation 10

The excavation was started in 2006 as a trench measured out in a north-south direction with sides of 12 x 2 m. On the southern side of the excavation, clay debris and medium size rocks

were found and traces of cement was seen on the south-western side. The aim of the excavation was to investigate this as it was believed that it could be the remains of a structure.

Loose soil and vegetation were removed at first and the artefacts lying on the surface was included in layer 1. Only 1 layer was excavated. At first it was excavated very careful in order to get a clear distinction between the rocks and the ordinary soil. The soil had a dark brown colour and was sandy and hard.

The excavation was later extended on the southern side in order to follow the rocks that became more clearly visible here. The extension was done to the west and measured 2 x 1 m. This was called excavation 10S (South) and was still layer 1, but it was also now deepened until a clay floor was found at certain areas.

It was clear that this was a structure, but the exact size and function thereof could not yet be determined. The depth of the excavation varied between 2 cm and 16 cm due to the slope of the environment. Although the soil was mostly brown, some reddish patches were found. These mainly were a result of clay debris. On the northern side of the excavation some very dark black burnt patches was found. Some ashy patches, grey in colour was also found here.

Apart from finding a clay floor in association with the foundation of rocks and cement, parts of this were also found more to the north of the rocks. Some pieces of cement clearly showed the impression made by corrugated iron on it. Burnt hut poles were also unearthed as well as a badly corroded large metal sleeper on the western side, which might have been used as a lintel.

From two of these hut poles samples were taken in order to do C¹⁴ dating. As time did not permit the completion of the excavation, it was re-excavated during the 2007 excavation season. At the end of the 2006 excavation season the excavation was covered by plastic sails and the soil thrown on top thereof. This enabled the excavators to save time in opening the excavation during the 2007 season (figure 36-37).

At first the size of the excavation was kept as it was during 2006. It however became clear that this was a much larger structure and therefore the excavation was extended to a rectangle of 10,8 m x 5,8 m (figure 38). Some trees prevented the further extension thereof. The aim was to completely open the structure.

As the extension was done sideways, all artefacts were still labelled layer 1. A large amount of hut clay was unearthed throughout the excavation. Because of the uneven distribution thereof the depth of the excavation varied. On the northern side it varied between 16 cm in the northwest, 5 cm in the centre and 17 cm in the northeast. On the eastern side it varied between 6 cm in the north and 16 cm in the south. On the western side it varied between 9 cm in the north and 5 cm in the south. On the southern side it was 8 cm in the southwest, 9 cm in the centre and 10 cm in the southeast.

The colour of the soil was dark brown, but as a result of the clay debris it showed patches of red. Some grey ashy patches were also found. In certain areas the clay floor, became more visible, but it was clear that there was a layer of plaster (made from clay) lying on top thereof. It was also clear that the structure was much larger than expected during 2006 and that it was still not completely opened during the 2007 excavation season.

Most of the clay was thick and only had pole impressions on one side (figure 39-40). This indicates that it was part of a ceiling. This type of ceiling is called a 'brandplafon' or 'brakplafon' (burn ceiling). It means that the building probably had a reed ceiling in order to keep it cool. The building was constructed of corrugated iron and therefore such a means of cooling was indeed necessary. This was topped with clay which was an effective fire preventing measure in those days.

The possibility that the wall might also have been plastered should be kept in mind as well. On removing the clay during the next excavation season one should be on the lookout for thinner clay underneath the thicker clay. Indications of this was found in the northwestern corner of the building (figure 41-42). This particular area gives the impression that the northern wall of the building may have been a plastered one.

As stones indicating a foundation was only found on the southern side it might indicate that the building only had one corrugated iron wall, whereas the rest may have been made from poles (post holes were identified) which were plastered. It is even possible that other walls were plastered clay walls without poles. In looking at the stone foundation it seems possible that the corrugated wall to the south was L-shaped (or even U-shaped) with a small extension running north on at least the south-eastern corner (figure 43-44). The shape of the stones here however indicates that there rather was an entrance at this corner. Some glass shards representing a number of gin bottles were found in close proximity to this corner, but this doesn't seem to have any particular meaning (figure 45).

The remains of two steel sleepers were found on the western side of the building indicating that it had at least two rooms (figure 46-48). These seem to mark the entrances to these rooms. At first it was thought that it represents lintels, but it probably is too heavy to have served that purpose. It therefore probably is thresholds. Both are very brittle and will not survive once it has been removed. The clay is imbedded thereon indicating that it was mortared into the clay.

If the building had two rooms the southern one may have had two entrances, including one on the south-eastern corner. It is of course possible that the building may have had three rooms with the entrance to the southern one on the indicated corner and the entrances of the other two next to each other on the eastern side.

One of the artefacts found on the eastern side is the metal remains of a purse, similar to what was found during previous excavation seasons on this site (figure 49). This was used to pay wages to people and may have been for the soldiers or the railway workers.

On the eastern side of the thresholds the remains of metal sheets were found (figure 50-51). These looks like sheets used on the roof ridge of a building or at the edge of a roof. These were not fully opened and will have to be relooked at during the next excavation season. It however does seem to indicate a corrugated iron roof for the structure.

In the end it was concluded that this was the remains of a rectangular building with two or three rooms, facing the east (figure 52-53). It is now clear that the building is quite large and that it had a roof, walls and doors (indicated by corrugated iron impressions in the cement and possible steel thresholds).

It seems to have had at least one wall made of corrugated iron on the southern side as well as a corrugated iron roof. The other walls probably existed of spaced poles (perhaps with reeds in between) with plastered clay as binding material. The building had a ceiling made of reeds with a layer of clay on top thereof.

This building is similar to other buildings from the time. Corrugated iron buildings with concrete foundations were used frequently during the Anglo Boer War (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2004: 27-29). At least three examples were in use by Steinaecker's Horse. Two of these (figure 54-55) were at Komatipoort and used as quarters for the soldiers (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2001:9). This is also the most likely function of the one that was excavated. The third one is a blockhouse that was used at the Sabi Bridge post (figure 56-57).

From the artefacts found here it seems as if the structure may have had a domestic purpose. It included fragments of plates, and ceramics and glass from alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Last mentioned included medicinal and food/sauce bottles.

Cultural material found here included ceramics, glass, metal, building material (clay and burnt wood) and plastic.

8.2 Area with stones

8.2.1 Excavation 13

This excavation was measured out in a north-south direction with sides of 5 x 4 m. It was on an area where a number of stones were found in such a position that it seemed to be the remains of a structure (figure 58). The type of plant material (e.g. Skoonma-se-tong) indicated disturbance. The aim of the excavation was therefore to investigate this.

Loose soil and vegetation were removed at first and the artefacts lying on the surface was included in layer 1 (figure 59). Only 1 layer was excavated (figure 60). The soil was extremely hard and had a dark brown colour. In some areas a hint of grey was identified and in other areas the soil was even black in colour. The texture of the soil was sandy consisting of large granules. Due to the slope of the area the depth of the excavation varied between 0,13 m in the northwest, 0,09 m in the northeast and 0,3 m in the southwest and southeast.

The excavation contained a few Iron Age type potshards without decoration. The stones eventually seemed to be ones placed loosely next to each other probably for someone to sit on. One fairly recent brick was also found as well as two lumps of cement or limestone. Last mentioned was probably the remains of bags of cement or limestone that was weathered away as the impressions of the bags could be detected. Other cultural material found here included ceramics, glass, metal and organic material.

The final conclusion is that there was no building in this area but that people placed the stones together to sit on, while taking a break from their daily activities. The cement/limestone might indicate that this was during the construction of something, probably the building of a store room right on the western side of the site. This building was erected by the South African Defence Force when they used the site in recent times. Therefore this area does not seem to have any connection to the historical (roundabout 1900) site. The burnt patches and ash probably are the result of veld fires.

9. Discussion and Conclusion

To fully understand the meaning of the excavated material from the site, the information of all the excavation seasons should be combined. It needs to be mentioned however that one more excavation season is planned as both structures excavated has not been opened in full yet. Due to the research on the site being part of a larger project including other sites, this will probably only be done in 2009. Therefore both excavation 9 and 10 were covered by sandbags and plastic sail with soil on top thereof in order to reopen it at a later stage.

It also needs to be mentioned that due to the rain much more areas with indications of possible structures were washed open during the 2006/07 rain season. It was therefore decided to give the site a longer rest period before the next excavation season as this will undoubtedly wash open more of the site and therefore assist with a better interpretation thereof.

Another important reason for continuous archaeological research is that the site is being eroded by the rain and due to its close proximity to the river. In the process the historical objects are washed away. This is indicated by the large scatters on the site which clearly are not middens but only loose objects lying around. It was clear during 2006 and 2007 that some artefacts has been washed away and scattered over a larger area than what was the case during 2005. Through the research at least some of these artefacts will be salvaged.

Most of the dateable artefacts found, represent the period of the Late 19th to the Early 20th century. The Anglo-Boer War was fought between 1899 and 1902. Therefore the site provides more than enough evidence that it was occupied during this period. The presence of military artefacts indicates the presence of a military unit (see Appendix A). Historical information obtained, indicate that the site was one of the outposts of the voluntary British military unit, Steinaecker's Horse (see section 7).

However, it should be noted that the area was also used prior to the Anglo-Boer War during the construction of the railway line and of the bridge just after the War. In 1898 Paul Bester, the ZAR appointed warden of the then Sabi Game Reserve, also had a hut here (Pienaar 1990: 397). In both cases it is uncertain whether this was on the northern or southern side of the river.

It also seems as if the main camp of the Steinaecker's Horse unit was on the southern side of the river, but nothing remained thereof. This means that the part of the site remaining on the northern side provides the only archaeological evidence of the unit in this area.

No stratigraphy could be detected in any of the excavations, meaning that artefacts from all the mentioned activities are probably mixed on the site. In order to indicate that the site was indeed occupied by Steinaecker's Horse, it is necessary to prove the existence of specific military related artefacts on site. These artefacts as well as the remains of structures could also be utilised to determine the activities the members of the unit were engaged in on this side of the Sabie River.

From the information indicated in the previous reports (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2006; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2007), it is evident that such military artefacts were indeed uncovered. Since the excavated cultural material from the 2007 excavation season are similar in age and

typology (see Appendix A) one can conclude that the site was indeed occupied by Steinaecker's Horse and perhaps also other military units associated with them, such as the Black Watch and Native Police.

Artefacts such as Iron Age type ceramic potsherds have been found. These are either the result of an Iron Age group residing at the site before the Anglo Boer War or it indicates the presence of indigenous people at the site during the War. Since it has been documented that Steinaecker's Horse did make use of local people, either as servants or as members of the indicated units (see Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2002: 47), it is possible that the artefacts are a result thereof.

Information on the unit also shows that it frequently made use of the local black community as servants. It is therefore not far fetched to assume that these people stayed with the members of Steinaecker's Horse at the site. It also is not impossible that members of some of the black military units, such as the Native Police and Black Watch, were present at the site. Members of the Native Police were indeed employed by the park as game watchers after the war (Skukuza archives: List of Native Police or watchers 1902-1903), probably due to their excellent knowledge of the area.

It is however interesting that no clear indication of social differentiation on the site could be found. At the Letaba outpost this could be distinguished very clearly from the different middens on the site. The sample of ceramics with a European origin dominates the ceramic sample, but it is known that the British military units were well stocked and these was probably also used by other people present on the site. The presence of non-European artefacts, indicate that the servants of the white soldiers probably still used Iron Age type pottery to cook for their masters and probably discarded broken vessels where they used it.

There can be two possibilities in explaining the apparent lack of social differentiation. Firstly it is possible that at the Sabi bridge post there were not really such a distinction made and everyone present on the site lived together without having separate huts, middens etc. However, this seems highly unlikely as the Sabi bridge post was probably second in importance to the headquarters of the unit at Komatipoort. One would expect that the conventions of the time would be much stronger at this post than at the remote ones such as the one at Letaba.

Since it is known that Steinaecker's Horse were also present on the southern side of the river, where the blockhouse was erected, it is possible that the river may have formed a natural barrier between the different groups and that the part of their camp on the northern side were mostly in use by the black troops. However, much more research is needed before such a conclusion can be regarded as final.

This might also explain the relative low indication of tinned rations on the site as it was evident from the Letaba outpost that the white soldiers ate these rations more than what was the case with the black troops. The latter were more inclined to supplementing their diet with fresh meat by hunting and fishing, although no fish hooks were found at Sabi Bridge. Historical sources show that tinned fruit and vegetables were also issued to them (Wolhuter 1973: 50). This was supplemented by eating the meat of domesticated and non-domesticated animals. From historical sources it is known that the members of Steinaecker's Horse also herded the stock from the local people in order to use it as food (Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 14-15). This included sheep, goat and cattle for meat as well as for milk.

It however should be noted that no substantial amount of faunal material have been found at this site. This might however be due to the type of soil close to the river, making it almost impossible for faunal material to survive. (The Letaba site is situated more or less 500 m from a small non-perennial stream whereas this site is right on the banks of a very large river.)

Although very little faunal material was found, the hunting of wildlife must have also occurred at Sabi Bridge. Major Greenhill-Gardyne was stationed here and his document stating rules for the preservation of wildlife must have partially emanated from his experience at this post. Stevenson-Hamilton also indicated that the wildlife was vary scarce in this area when he moved in after the War. According to his report for 1903 the members of Steinaecker's Horse "...got their meat almost entirely from the game which they shot."

The members of the unit however did stop the local black people from shooting in their vicinity and in the neighbourhood of Sabi Bridge. Species such as (blue) wildebeest, impala, zebra and warthog are mentioned and he states that in some areas some of the antelopes were almost completely exterminated. These practices only ended during the first half of 1903 when most of the natives left the park (Skukuza archives: Report of the Government Game Reserve, 29.11.1903).

The report written by Greenhill-Gardyne was used as a guide by Stevenson-Hamilton when he started working in the Park. The experience gained during the War was also handy and some of the members of the unit were therefore recruited as game wardens after the War. In this way they contributed to the establishment of the Park as it is known today.

Spent cartridges and shot gun cartridges were also found, confirming that hunting and fighting might have taken place. The presence of a number of percussion caps found during 2005 may also indicate that the black units were present on the northern side of the river as they might have been provided with these inferior front loader rifles whereas the regular units received more modern rifles. It might also indicate the presence of local people at the site and that these people were not armed by the British, but had their own rifles (front loaders) as protection. The latter seem most likely as historical information does state that the black people, employed by Steinaecker's Horse, were armed with Martini Henry rifles, the same rifles as those used by the British soldiers (Skukuza archives: Report of the Government Game Reserve, 29.11.1903).

During the 2006 excavation season much less artefact were found in comparison with that of the 2005 excavation season. In 2007 this was even less than in 2006. This is believed to mostly be the result of excavating structures. The remains of such structures usually does not bear many artefacts due to people not leaving complete objects and things still in a working condition behind, whereas the broken things they would leave behind would be discarded on refuse middens. However the remains of the structures, consisting of building material may also be of significance in interpreting the site.

The garrison definitely consumed large amounts of alcohol, as well as other non-alcoholic beverages. Glass from liquor bottles as well as the lead seals of these bottles was excavated. Fragments of Rose's Lime Juice bottles and wine glasses were also uncovered.

Unfortunately one will never be able to fully explore this issue and to determine the size of the site. Although a few artefacts, e.g. parts of tins and glass shard were noted on the southern side of the bridge, it is too little to make any other conclusion apart from the fact that these artefacts belong to the same time period. This is the result of the development of the Skukuza rest camp on the southern side of the river, which probably demolished what might have been left on that side of the river.

A few artefacts were also identified on the western side of the train bridge (the northern side of the river) indicating that the site might have expanded to that area. However the larger concentration of artefacts seems to be in an area of roughly 120 m in diameter on the northern bank of the river, but to the eastern side of the bridge.

It has been mentioned that Steinaecker's Horse erected a block house on the southern side of the river. The purpose of the blockhouse must have been to guard the temporary bridge over the river. One might be tempted to think that this is an indication of the outpost only being on the southern side. However, it should be realised that the British (Steinaecker's Horse) were in control of the area between Komatipoort and Sabi bridge and frequently used the railway line between these two sites (Stirling 1907: 273; Bornman 2004: 3). They also had a small outpost at Kilo 104 to the north of Sabi Bridge, where the railway line ended (Woolmore 2006: 74).

The railway to the northern side of the Sabi River therefore was mainly not protected and with only a military presence on the southern side, it would be possible for the Boers to damage the railway and bridge on the other side at night, without the British noticing. Therefore it seems logical that Steinaecker's Horse would also have part of their camp on the northern side. It is even possible that this might have been larger than the part of the camp on the southern side. The British usually erected blockhouses on both sides of bridges and it is not known why this didn't occur here. Having a large contingent of people on the northern side however, would have solved this problem.

For such a large number of people, it was necessary to have enough shelter and provision also had to be made for storing food and other materials. After the temporary bridge had been washed away by the 1901 flood, this probably became more important as it could not have been an easy task to cross the river and one would think that this activity would not have taken place frequently. Therefore they probably took rations to the northern side every once in a while and had to store it to protect it from environmental influences. This may provide an explanation for finding more structures on this site than at the Letaba outpost.

The area where excavation 1 was measured out at first looked like a midden. It is now believed that this might have been a store room, something similar to that of a quarter master store. This is derived from the large variation in artefacts found here as well as the larger number of certain artefacts such as the metal part of purses and uniform buttons. Clay debris was also found, but these did not indicate any specific form and a floor could not be detected. It is therefore believed that the structure did not have a formal floor. As it is known that Von Steinaecker demolished and burnt down some of the structures when he realised after the War that his unit was not to be given the permanent duty as a border guard, it explains the lack of establishing a specific form (Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 55). Having no floor might also indicate that the structure had to be build quickly after the 1901 flood.

Excavation 2 probably was an area where a military ritual of opening champagne by slicing off the head of the bottle with a single blow of a sword was performed. The pile of stones was probably placed here as a platform for the bottles to stand on in performing the ritual.

Excavation 3 was extended as excavation 7 during 2006 and excavation 4 was extended to excavation 8. It is believed that these were two different structures. Unfortunately not enough indication of clay was found to determine the forms of these structures, but it definitely seems to have had plastered clay walls and wooden posts. From the extraordinary amount of glass found at excavation 3 it is believed that this might have been a store room for alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages or for storing the empty bottles.

No clear indication of floors was found, but a burnt layer in excavation 4 could be the remains of a floor. It therefore is not possible to say whether these structures had floors. Of course these might have been destroyed when Von Steinaecker burnt down the place. The artefacts from excavation 4 and 8 do not give an indication of the function thereof and this question will therefore remain unanswered.

The final conclusion drawn from these four excavations is that the structures probably was not formalised. It probably did not have floors or even roofs. It therefore seems to have been something like an oval or half moon shaped screen-like shelter. The northern one (excavation 3 and 7) was used to store (full or empty) glass bottles. This might have had no other purpose than to keep the appearance of the camp neat (and may therefore explain the lack of middens).

The area where excavation 5, 6, 11 and 12 were done is definitely a midden, but it seem to be not as large and deep as those found at the Letaba site. The apparent lack of artefacts may be explained by speculating that there may be more middens which have not been detected yet on this side of the river, although this seems highly unlikely. A more feasible suggestion is that middens were present on the southern side of the river or that refuse were also thrown into the river, which is only a few meters south of this particular midden. This may also provide an explanation for the lack of certain artefacts in comparison with the Letaba site. The last mentioned possibility seems very likely.

The stones and limestone blocks excavated at excavation 13 is of a fairly recent origin. This seems to belong to the time when the SA Defence Force was present at the site.

Excavation 9 and 10 proved to be the most interesting of the site thus far. Both contained structures. As concluded above the structure at excavation 9 was a blacksmith area. The artefactual evidence including possible grinding stones, hammer stones and anvils (see Appendix A) seem to corroborate this. It therefore seems likely that this structure was linked to the building of the Railway Bridge and railway rather than with Steinaecker's Horse. It is however possible that the soldiers also used it during the war. Steinaecker's Horse did use the railway line and may have had to repair it from time to time. During the War other blacksmith activities may have taken place here, such as to shoe horses and mules.

The building which remains were unearthed by excavation 10 was probably used as quarters for the soldiers. As the railway stock was available on the site it was used in the construction of this building. The ZAR stored their stock on the line between Sabi Bridge and Komatipoort and of course the British (Steinaecker's Horse) seized this after taking control of this line. Artefacts uncovered here support this theory. Ceramics and glass excavated

were mostly of a domestic origin and also included the remains of alcoholic beverages. The metal included nails that were bent to form hooks probably for hanging clothes or other household objects. It also included remains of clothing, a pocket knife and two six pence coins, one used as a pendant (see Appendix A).

Both of these excavations are not completed yet. It is trusted that the completion thereof in the next excavation season will illuminate these structures further.

The block house that was erected at on the southern side of the bridge was used by Stevenson-Hamilton as his office after September 1902 (Stevenson-Hamilton 1930:7; Skukuza archives: photo album nos. 1, 4 & 5). Proof was also found that the Letaba site was reused after the War (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003: 51). It therefore seems logical that the camp on the northern side might also have been reused.

Historical information shows that some members of the unit became game rangers in the Park and that they played an important role in the establishment of what is today known as the Kruger National Park. This serves as explanation that they knew these sites and utilised it later. The following persons are known to have been stationed (at least for a period of time) at the Sabi bridge post during the War:

Officers:

Major AW Greenhill-Gardyne

Major R Robertson

Captain JB Holgate

Lieutenant HC Wolhuter (the famous game ranger Harry Wolhuter)

Troopers:

Samuel Smart who was killed by a lion at this post

Percy Willis

BC Willis

Stevenson-Hamilton (1952: 17) indicates that a number of horses and men were killed by lions at Sabi Bridge. Wolhuter (1948: 46) also described that eight people from Steinaecker's Horse died in one season from black water. This indicates the harsh conditions under which they had to operate. Many horses also died of horse sickness (Wolhuter 1948: 59).

Finally it can be concluded that there is no doubt that the site was occupied by members of the Steinaecker's Horse military unit during the Anglo-Boer War. People from the local black community lived with the soldiers at the site and may even have been there before it was occupied by the military. Members of black military units also may have been present at the site. Some of the structures excavated are rather linked to the building of the railway line and railway bridge that with Steinaecker's Horse, but is not unreasonable to suggest that the latter also made use of these.

At least one more excavation season (2009) is planned. It will be aimed at completing excavations 9 and 10 as well as the documentation of other site features unearthed via natural processes between 2007 and 2009. Future research will depend on the findings of this planned excavation season.

10. Recommendations

1. Because of the location of the site, on the bank of the Sabie River, flooding poses a great danger to the material remains. As indicated, signs of erosion are visible on the site and if this trend continues very little would remain of the site in the next few years. It is therefore important that research on the site will continue in order to obtain as much information from it as possible. ***The Kruger National Park did the right thing in having the site researched, in order to document the information. It is therefore recommended that research continues. In this way more information on the War in this area will be gathered.***
2. The site is well situated for the purpose of tourism. It is in close proximity to the Skukuza rest camp and is accessible via road (although tourists are at the moment not allowed to travel on this road). This will however depend on the Kruger National Park's different policies regarding cultural resources. In such a case it would be necessary to clean up the remains left on the site by the SANDF as it is very untidy at present. ***In the event of such plans being investigated, a proper management plan should be written. Archaeos could be contacted in order to serve as a consultant in this regard.***
3. A display of the site can be installed at Skukuza or on the site, but this should only be done after completion of the archaeological research on the site. At the site this can be done by fixing the brick building left by the SANDF and using it as an interpretative centre. As members of the Steinaecker's Horse unit played an important role in the establishment of the Kruger National Park, this is an appropriate way to remember these pioneers. It also shows the park's involvement in the conservation of its cultural heritage, but also the cultural heritage of the area. Such a display will also provide the visitor to the park with an additional heritage experience.
4. Although the historical information on the site and Steinaecker's Horse unit now is more than what was gathered during the excavations at Letaba, it still seems to lack certain information. ***Any information in this regard that comes to the attention of someone should be directed to the researchers*** in order to include it into the total history of the site and Steinaecker's Horse.
5. Ongoing historical research should continue in order to obtain more information regarding Steinaecker's Horse. This will also assist in writing a full history of the unit.
6. The map drawn by Major J. Stevenson-Hamilton on 13.10.1903 is currently being studied and compared with other historical information in order to try to locate the other sites where Steinaecker's Horse had outposts. ***This should however be followed up by a field survey in order to physically locate and assess these sites with regard to research potential and degradation. If successful, this would enable the researchers to do comparative studies in order to write the full story of this unit. Because of the environmental factors working against the preservation of these sites this project should commence as soon as possible.***
7. The large number of artifacts excavated during 2005 made the transport and storage thereof difficult. This is especially true with regards to the large number of glass shards. It has therefore been decided not to collect everything excavated in future, but to only keep those that will assist in making conclusions, such as those with maker's marks, bottle necks etc. Other shards will be counted and placed back in the excavation it came from. This is in accordance with the no-collection strategy in archaeology as described by Butler (1979: 795-799). Due to the limited number of artifacts collected during 2006 and 2007 it was not necessary to implement this policy, but this will be used on all other Steinaecker's Horse sites in future.

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Appendix A

**A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE ANALYSIS
OF CULTURAL MATERIAL RECOVERED
FROM THE 2007 EXCAVATIONS AT THE
SABI BRIDGE OUTPOST OF STEINAECKER'S HORSE**

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Introduction

The 2007 archaeological excavations was a continuance of fieldwork started during 2005 at the Sabi Bridge outpost, a historical-archaeological site linked with Steinaecker's Horse, a volunteer military unit that fought on the side of the British against the Boers during the Anglo-Boer War (1899 – 1902). Six excavations (Excavations 1 – 6) were carried out in 2005, with the next 6 at the site (Excavations 7 – 12) done in 2006. Two of these were not completed in 2006 (9 & 10). This report deals with material recovered from the completed excavations of these two features, while material from a new excavation (Excavation 13) is also discussed.

Pictures of railway spikes are included in the list of figures (Figure 61-62).

Excavation 9

Ceramics

- (a) 1 piece of porcelain (iron stone) plate. Decorated with flower & tree design brown in colour. Late 19th – early 20th century (Figure 63). Similar pieces found in 2006 and also on other same-period sites, such as the Minnaar Street Historical dump in Pretoria

Metal

- (a) 3 rolls/strands of copper wire (Figure 64-65). Found at northern wall of structure that was excavated. Ends were attached to/wound around screws. Some sections have evidence of cloth-like insulation around wire. Could thus mean copper wire is evidence of conveying electricity
- (b) 115 metal fragments. Various objects, unidentifiable
- (c) 4 x nails and pieces of nails (Figure 66). Only 1 complete. 82mm long
- (d) 40 x screws and washers and pieces of screws (Figure 66). Some with washers still attached. Roof-type screws
- (e) 1 x large (6 sided) washer/nut. Function? Looks like the ones used on the railway sleepers (Figure 67-68)
- (f) 1 x thin, small, copper/brass object. Possibly part of lock/keyhole (Figure 67-68).

Glass

- (a) 15 x bottle fragments (Figure 69). Parts of one bottle. Found in southeast corner of excavation. Pieces of base etc. Dark green Rum bottle
- (b) 1 x piece of bottle glass. Possibly wine bottle
- (c) 52 x bottle fragments (Figure 70). All part of one bottle. Pieces burnt. Looks like soda/mineral water bottle. Southeast corner

- (d) 3 x small bottle fragments. 2 individual bottles represented. Possible medicine and a soda/mineral water bottle

Faunal Remains

- (a) 1 x identifiable bone. Phalanges. Bov. III size? (cattle or non-domestic)

Organic material

- (a) 2 x pieces of burnt wood. Plank (clearly cut). Could this be part of roofing or flooring?

Stone objects

- (a) 11 x pieces of stone. Signs of edge wear (Figure 71). At least 3 possible grinding stones/hammer stones/anvils. Could this be (further) evidence of the metal working/manufacturing function of the structure excavated

TOTAL OBJECTS EXCAV. 9 = 253

Metal = 164 Glass = 74 Ceramics = 1 Bone = 1 Wood = 2 Stone = 11

Excavation 10

Glass

- (a) 1 x base of bottle (2 pieces). Pinkish/purplish colour (Figure 72). Could possibly be a liquor flask or something similar
- (b) 1 x piece of glass. Thin rim piece of a wine glass
- (c) 1 x glass bottle stopper. **HOLBROOK & Co.** Worcestershire sauce (Figure 73)
- (d) 1 x bottle neck and top. Completely molten. Possibly soda/mineral water bottle
- (e) 108 x pieces of glass. Parts of wine. Soda/mineral water, medicinal and other household/food (sauce) bottles
- (f) 381 x pieces of bottle glass. Case gin or rum bottles (Figure 74). Some, or most, of these pieces probably fits with the 6 in situ case gin bottles found near the southern corner of the excavation (see excavation photos).
- (g) 1 x glass bottle seal. From a case gin bottle (Figure 75-76). **J.H. HENKES DISTILLER DELFTSHAVEN.** Late 19th century
- (h) 51 x pieces of glass, representing 6 individual case gin bottles. Found close together in one area of the excavation. Tops and bases. 2 pieces of tops/necks with seal on. Also **J.H. HENKES DISTILLER DELFTSHAVEN.** Would be possible to reconstruct all

bottles. Another neck/top piece with attached seal with inscription **BLANKENHEYM & NOLET**.

Ceramics

- (a) 99 x pieces of salt glazed stoneware gin/ginger beer bottle (Figure 77). Top, base, etc. At least one, maybe 2 vessels. Could be reconstructed. Late 19th century. Some pieces with trade/maker's name **HULSTKAMP & Zn & MOLYN ROTTERDAM**
- (b) 7 x pieces of slat glazed stoneware vessel. Dark brown in colour
- (c) 1 x piece of porcelain (ironstone). Base of small vessel (Figure 78). Probably salve/ointment container
- (d) 2 x pieces of porcelain (ironstone) plate (Figure 79). Double line (blue) just below rim. Similar found at Letaba & 2005/6 at Sabi Bridge.
- (e) 51 x pieces of salt glazed ink vessel (Figure 80). Late 19th century

Metal

- (a) Large amount of metal fragments. Pieces of roofing (corrugated iron?).
- (b) 241 x nails and fragments of nails (Figure 81-82). At least 4 different sizes. Some nails bent purposefully (evidence of being bent to "fix" planks together. Further evidence of a substantial structure present here. 1 = 15cm (l); 2 = 7.5cm (l); 3 = 4.5cm (l) and 4 = 2cm (l)
- (c) 4 x roof-type screws and 1 x washer with part of screw still attached (Figure 83)
- (d) 1 x brass/copper screw-in hook (Figure 84). 5cm in length. Probably used for hanging objects such as clothing/towels
- (e) 1 x unidentifiable metal object (Figure 85). Part of handle of some sorts? 100mm (l) x 33mm (w) x 15mm (thick)
- (f) 1 x unidentifiable lead object (Figure 84). Function? Looks like small hook
- (g) 1 x brass/copper eye/button (Figure 84). Probably part of tent sail/rain jacket. 15mm (diam)
- (h) 1 x brass/copper button/cufflink (Figure 84). Triangular shape – looks like spinning-top
- (i) 1 x brass/copper cross (Figure 84). Large number of these found during 2005 & 2006 excavations as well
- (j) 3 x pieces of metal clasping (Figure 84) of purse (see 2005/6 for more examples). The purse sections were found in the same section of the excavation as the two Queen Victoria silver six pence pieces – See (k). Opening of purse 65mm wide

- (k) 2 x coins – both silver six pence pieces (Figure 86-87). 1 = 1872 Six Pence. “TAIL SIDE” Crown & flower wreath and date (crown style differs from 1889 piece). HEAD SIDE Young Queen Victoria. VICTORIA DEL GRATIA BRITT REGINA REG... (illegible). Two small holes in coin, evidence of use as pendant. 19mm in diam. 2 = 1889 Six Pence. TAIL SIDE same as 1872 coin, but with different crown. HEAD SIDE Older Queen Victoria. Same wording as on 1872 coin
- (l) 1 x very corroded pocket knife “JOSEPH RODGER’s” (Figure 88). Single blade. Found near coins and 6 case gin (square) bottles. 85mm long and with blade (65mm long) extended approx. 150mm in length
- (m) 1 x spent cartridge still to be identified.*

Hut rubble

- (a) 36 x pieces of clay & plaster (Figure 89-91). Some with pole, reed and possible thatch impressions. Plaster with impressions evidence of roof with reeds & clay (fire-proofing) – Pers.comm Deidre Viljoen. Some pieces burnt

Miscellaneous

- (a) 2 x white, plastic, buttons (Figure 92)
- (b) 1 x white (round) plastic bead (Figure 93)

TOTAL OBJECTS EXCAV. 10 = 1003

Metal = 258 Glass = 546 Ceramics = 160 Hut rubble = 36 Miscellaneous = 3

* Specialist analysis of ammunition still in progress.

Excavation 13

Glass

- (a) 189 x pieces of glass. Some with bits of maker’s/trade names, but not identifiable. 2 base pieces and 1 neck/top piece with plastic cap. Household and medicinal. 2 pieces possible late 19th century rum/gin bottle. Most pieces very recent/modern.

Ceramics

- (a) 272 pieces of Iron Age-type pottery (Figure 94). Mostly low-fired, coarse, pieces. Storage and cooking vessels. 2 x lip pieces with traces of graphite burnish. Too small to determine shape/profile of vessel

Metal

- (a) 2 x pieces of a large tin/can lid – fuel drum?

- (b) 20 x pieces of metal fragments – parts of tins
- (c) 2 x pieces of a small screw-on lid – part of oil drum?
- (d) 1 x piece of thin brass/copper object – unidentifiable (Figure 95)
- (e) 1 x cylindrical shaped copper/brass object (Figure 95). Open at one end, with small hole at the bottom of closed end. 21mm (l) x 13mm (diam.)
- (f) 1 x metal nut (Figure 95)
- (g) 1 x large, heavy, peg (Figure 95). Function? Has a bayonet shape. Groove cut along whole length of object. 180mm (l) x 25mm (w)
- (h) 1 x piece of what looks like a pocket-knife handle (Figure 95)
- (i) 1 x spent cartridge, probably of recent origin.*

Miscellaneous

- (a) 5 x pieces of leather cord. One section has a tied knot

C14 Material

- (a) 1 small sample charcoal/burnt wood

TOTAL OBJECTS EXCAV. 13 = 497

Metal = 30 Glass = 189 Ceramics = 272 Miscellaneous and C14 = 6

TOTAL OBJECTS 2007 EXCAVATIONS = 1753

Metal = 452 Glass = 809 Ceramics = 433 Stone = 11 Miscellaneous = 48

* Specialist analysis of ammunition still in progress.

Appendix B

Captions of figures

1. Location of the site, marked with a red circle north of the Skukuza rest camp.
2. Location of the site in relation to the Skukuza rest camp.
3. Site plan of Steinaecker's Horse Sabi Bridge post.
4. View from the south on Excavation 9 after the soil and sails have been lifted and before the excavation of the 2007 season commenced.
5. View from the east on Excavation 9 after the soil and sails have been lifted and before the excavation of the 2007 season commenced.
6. View from the west on Excavation 9 after the soil and sails have been lifted and before the excavation of the 2007 season commenced.
7. Plan of Excavation 9.
8. Pick head still inside its metal box. It was found at the south-eastern corner of the structure at excavation 9.
9. Head of a shovel found at the northern wall of the structure at excavation 9.
10. Two crowbars found against the brick wall on the east of the structure at excavation 9.
11. A hoop probably from a wooden barrel found at the southern wall of the structure at excavation 9. Note the roof screw and washer, one of many excavated at the site.
12. Eastern view of the north-eastern corner of the blacksmith area. Note the metal bracket and railway spikes. Also note the clay edge on the right hand side which seem to indicate the border of this working station.
13. Northern view of the north-eastern corner.
14. Detail of the eastern brick wall during excavation.
15. The brick wall of the blacksmith area during excavation.
16. Eastern view of the eastern brick wall during excavation a few days later.
17. Another view on the eastern brick wall.
18. Inside of the eastern brick wall. Note the wooden beams underneath the bricks and the thick layer of ash below the beam. From this photograph it looks as if the brick wall was built after the beams have been placed in position. It might indicate that the furnace area might have been in use for some time before the structure was completed.

19. Another view on the inside of the eastern brick wall. Note the damaged area where the tree is growing.
20. Eastern view of the south-eastern corner of the blacksmith area.
21. Southern view of the south-eastern corner of the blacksmith area.
22. Northern view of the south-eastern corner of the blacksmith area. Note the different pieces of metal plates to the east.
23. View of the southern brick wall of the blacksmith area.
24. View of the southern brick wall of the blacksmith area with the uneven stone floor in front. Also note the hoop to the north of the floor.
25. The granite floor on the south of the blacksmith area.
26. Close-up view of the granite floor.
27. Western view of the south-western corner.
28. Southern view of the south-western corner.
29. The beam on the western side of the blacksmith area.
30. The northwestern corner of the furnace at the blacksmith area. Again note the metal bracket and railway spikes. Also note that the bracket has been nailed into the beam on the right of the photograph.
31. The beam on the northern side of the furnace.
32. Northern view of the north-eastern corner of the blacksmith area after excavation.
33. South-eastern view of the blacksmith area after excavation.
34. Western view of the blacksmith area after excavation.
35. Northern view of the blacksmith area after excavation.
36. Northern view of excavation 10 after the soil and sails have been removed and before commencing with the 2007 excavations.
37. Western view of excavation 10 after the soil and sails have been removed and before commencing with the 2007 excavations.
38. Plan of excavation 10.

39. Northwestern corner of excavation 10. Note the clay in the front and the ashy area at the back.
40. View on excavation 10 from the west. Note the clay in the front.
41. The clay in the northwestern corner of excavation 10 seems to indicate a plastered clay wall.
42. Detail of possible plastered clay wall.
43. Western view on the foundation of the building on the southern side thereof.
44. Southern view of the completed excavation 10.
45. Detail of the remains of gin bottles found in the southeast of excavation 10.
46. This photograph shows the two thresholds made from metal sleepers. These are very brittle and would not survive once the excavation is extended to a second layer.
47. Close-up of one of the thresholds.
48. Northern view of excavation 10 during excavation thereof.
49. Metal remains of a purse found in excavation 10.
50. Metal sheets that probably formed part of the ridge or edge of a corrugated iron roof for the building.
51. Detail of one of the pieces of the mentioned metal sheet.
52. Northern view of the completed excavation 10.
53. Close-up view of the completed excavation 10.
54. Historical photograph of the garrison of Steinaecker's Horse at Komatipoort in front of a building similar to the one excavated at excavation 10. Note the corrugated iron, the placement of wooden poles, the use of reeds and the metal roof ridge of the building. Behind the soldiers to the right one can see that the building had a stone foundation. These aspects all seem to have been used in the building excavated at Sabi Bridge also. It looks as if the building had a veranda and a pitched roof. It also is interesting to note the black people on the background on the right hand side of the photograph.
55. Another historical photograph of members of Steinaecker's Horse in front of a similar building at Komatipoort. Note the reed blinds hanging from the roof.
56. The block house erected by Steinaecker's Horse at Sabi Bridge. Note the use of corrugated iron and wooden poles. Again the building has a pitched roof.

57. Another photograph of the block house at Sabi Bridge. Unfortunately the quality of the photograph makes any further deductions difficult.
58. Excavation 13 before excavation.
59. Excavation 13 after clearing vegetation and loose soil. Note the two pieces of cement/ limestone in the back right hand corner.
60. Excavation 13 after it has been completed.
61. A railway spike from the United States of America. It was used to fix the track to the tie (sleeper). It does seem to be similar to those excavated at excavation 9.
62. Another picture of similar railway spikes, one being heavily corroded.
63. Piece of iron stone plate from Excavation 9.
64. Roll of copper wire from Excavation 9.
65. Detail of insulation on above mentioned wire.
66. Nails and roof screws with washers from Excavation 9.
67. Top side of a large nut and part of a lock/keyhole from Excavation 9.
68. Bottom side of a large nut and part of a lock/keyhole from Excavation 9.
69. Bottle glass from Excavation 9.
70. Glass from a soda water or mineral water bottle from Excavation 9. The second piece shows signs of burning.
71. Possible grinding stones, hammer stones and anvils from Excavation 9.
72. Base of glass bottle probably a liquor flask from Excavation 10.
73. Glass bottle stopper of a Worcestershire sauce bottle excavated at Excavation 10.
74. Gin or rum bottles from Excavation 10.
75. Seal on one of the above mentioned bottles.
76. Detail of the mentioned seal.
77. Stoneware gin bottle fragments from Excavation 10.
78. Base of a small salve/ointment container from Excavation 10.
79. Pieces of an iron stone plate from Excavation 10.

80. Piece of an ink vessel from Excavation 10.
81. Different nails found in Excavation 10.
82. A small nail from Excavation 10.
83. Roof screws from Excavation 10.
84. Two hooks, part of a cufflink/button, small cross, an eye from a tent or clothing and metal clasping of a purse from Excavation 10.
85. Metal object that may have been a handle on a case or may have been used as strengthening on a case such as an ammunition case.
86. Head side of two six pence coins excavated at Excavation 10. The first one date to 1872 and the second one to 1889. The first one seems to have been used as a pendant.
87. Tail side of the above mentioned coins.
88. Remains of a Joseph Rogers pocket knife from Excavation 10.
89. Clay plaster with pole impressions from Excavation 10 which probably formed part of a ceiling.
90. Smoothly plastered side of clay from Excavation 10.
91. Another piece of plastered clay from a ceiling found in Excavation 10.
92. White plastic button from Excavation 10.
93. Plastic bead from Excavation 10.
94. Iron Age type ceramics from Excavation 13.
95. Metal objects from Excavation 13.