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FIRST PHASE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HERITAGE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DIAMOND PROSPECTING AT TAFELKOP 1154, (PETRUSBURG), BLOEMFONTEIN DISTRICT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

De Beers Exploration is planning to do diamond prospecting at the farm Tafelkop 1154 in the Bloemfontein district located near Petrusburg. The proposed land lies at the foot of a prominent hill called Tafelkop along the border fence with the adjacent farm Van Heerdens Dam 369. The prospecting will be done on 78ha of unspoilt land.

A vague scatter of Anglo-Boer War heavily soldered food rations tin cans were found near the farm house at Van Heerdens Dam. This occurrence was confirmed by the farm owner who remembered that there was a considerable scatter of Boer War “blikkies” at this particular place. The farmer (76) speaks of a skirmish there on the farm and mentions a number of sangars on the low lying hill nearby. He tells about a visit many years ago, by an old war veteran who spoke about a fight during the Anglo-Boer War and also mentioned about a British officer who had been buried there. Anglo-Boer War specialists are familiar with the farm, but do not recall any knowledge of the fight.

A cluster of about 16 stone covered graves occur nearby. The graves are thickly overgrown and seem to be very old.

Heavily patinated Middle Stone Age flakes and flaked cores are found in an area along the water course at the foot of Tafelkop hill. The stone artefacts seem to be a fairly general occurrence in the specific area and the flakes are considered as insignificant. No other cultural or historical remains were found.

It is assumed that the prospecting developments will have a minor impact on the cultural heritage and historical environment at Tafelkop. Further planning of the proposed project may continue, and no mitigation measures will be needed.

INTRODUCTION & DESCRIPTION

Scope and Limitations

De Beers Exploration is planning to do diamond prospecting at the farm Tafelkop 1154 in the Bloemfontein district near Petrusburg. The prospecting will be done on a 78ha portion of the farm. De Beers Exploration commissioned the archaeological and heritage assessment of the proposed diamond prospecting.

The investigation provided the opportunity to examine the proposed site. The soil surface consists of undisturbed grass-covered open veld. This did not have any significant effect on the recording of material during the survey and no limitations were experienced through the site visit.

Methodology

1. Standard archaeological survey and recording methods applied.
2. Survey of previous HIA reports.
3. Site inspection on foot and by vehicle.
4. Layout of the area and features plotted by GPS.
5. Surroundings and features recorded on camera.
6. Preparation of maps & literature.
7. Research on the history, archaeology & heritage remains.
8. Prepare map coordinates transferred to Google Earth.

INVESTIGATION

De Beers Exploration is planning diamond prospecting at the farm Tafelkop 1154 in the Bloemfontein district near Petrusburg. The site was examined on 16 July 2014. Officials from De Beers Exploration supplied the particulars about the locality of the site.

The study aims to locate and evaluate the significance of cultural heritage sites, archaeological material, manmade structures older than 60 years, and sites associated with oral histories and graves that might be affected by the proposed developments. In many cases, planted and self-sown trees and other types of vegetation represent a major part of the historical environment of human settlements in villages and towns, on farmyards or even deserted places in the open veld. These features are taken into consideration during any cultural investigation.

The land was examined for possible archaeological and historical material and to establish the potential impact on any cultural material that might be found. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is done in terms of the National Heritage

Resources Act (NHRA), (25 of 1999) and under the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act. 108 of 1998).

HISTORY OF PETRUSBURG DISTRICT

The history of Petrusburg and surroundings is well documented (Schoeman 1980). The town of Petrusburg was established in 1891 to serve the farms in the region between Bloemfontein and Kimberley. The built-up settlement started on a farm close to the Emmaus railway station along the line from Bloemfontein to Kimberley. The original foundations of the first establishment (at Emmaus) are still there. The town ran out of water very soon and had to be moved to the present location on the farm Diepfontein where a strong natural spring was available. The first houses had free running irrigation water from the fountain. The place was named after Petrus Albertus Venter, who owned the land.

During the Anglo-Boer War (1900-1902), when Lord Roberts occupied Bloemfontein early in May 1900, the British forces surprised the town defence by their approach from the south. In September 1900 Lord Roberts instructed Major Genl. Baden-Powell, to establish a Constabulary Force for the Transvaal, Free State and Swaziland, expected to be in place by June 1901. The Orange River Colony Constabulary Force consisted of one division of 1000 men. Recruiting points were established in the Cape Colony and Natal and arrangements were made to enlist more members from England and Canada, with additional remounts in South Africa, Australia and North America. Due to a rapid escalation of hostilities in the Free State and Transvaal, the Constabulary formation had to be increased to 10 000 men in December 1900, with the addition of a Reserve Division in 1901.

From the time of its establishment, the Constabulary units were employed as a military force engaged in field operations and acting as sentries on the Blockhouse lines. By the end of the war nine officers and 85 men of the Constabulary were killed in action or died from wounds, 213 were wounded, while 274 officers and men died from sickness.

After the termination of the War, the various Constabulary Troops were ordered to extend their presence over the Free State Colony. Self-contained units of 100 men each, separated to several small outstations to occupy a specific district. This network of posts and patrols aimed to ensure that farms were visited regularly and country boundaries patrolled in the same method. The contention of this ruling was to bring the drifting Black population under control and to enable the repatriation of Burghers and women and children from the concentration camps to proceed without any delay. Despite the good intentions of the British occupational force, the mere presence of the former Constabulary troops acting as policemen hampered the interaction between ordinary Burghers on their farms and the Constabulary, thus causing relations to take some years to

normalise. In August 1902, Resident Magistrates took up their duties while depending on the Force to uphold them and give effect to their instructions. After explaining the new administration to the various tribes, Native Commissioners were able to carry out the disarmament of the “Natives” throughout the country. In November 1902, peace was secured and it became viable to reduce the Constabulary force to its original establishment of 6000 men, with different sections organised according to the Magisterial Districts, with a certain number of men allocated to each district, sub-districts and Police posts. A few mobile troops were retained as a reserve ready for any emergency service. By 1903 the South African Constabulary already included 952 Black troops as so-called “Native Police”. This ruling continued until 1907, when the establishment of an official police force finally substituted the South African Constabulary.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The archaeological environment of the Free State Province is rich and diverse, representing a long time span during the human past. The area is exceptionally rich in terms of Stone Age material and rock art sites. Some areas are richer than others and not all the sites are equally significant. For various reasons, there is still a relative lack in research records in many parts. Certain Later Iron Age sites have produced important archaeological information (Maggs 1976, Dreyer 1996). These Iron Age sites date between 1660 AD and 1810 AD.

The Later Iron Age archaeological phase brought people to the interior that cultivated crops, kept livestock, produced an abundance of clay pottery in a variety of shapes and sizes and knowledge of smelting copper and iron. Extensive stone walled enclosures characterised the permanent settlements. These living places are known from the prominent Sotho/Tswana settlements at Viervoet (Tihela) near Clocolan, Biddulpsberg (Kurutlele) near Senekal and Marabeng near Ficksburg. A number of Taaibos Korana and Griqua groups, remnants of the Later Stone Age peoples, managed to survive the assimilation by Sotho/Tswana tribes in the region.

Dramatic climate changes resulted in a rapid population growth along the east coast of South Africa. Increased pressure on natural resources and attempts to control trade during the early 19th century brought the emergence of powerful leaders in the area. The subsequent power struggles resulted in a period of instability in the central parts of Southern Africa. This period of strife or wars of devastation, known as the “difaqane” (Sotho/Tswana) or “Mfecane” (Nguni), affected many of the Black tribes in the interior. Attacks from east of the escarpment initiated by the AmaZulu impis of King Chaka in about 1822, were carried on by the AmaNdebele of Mzilikazi and the AmaNgwane of Matiwane into the Free State, thus uprooting among others, the Batlokwa of Sekonyela and Mantatise and various smaller Sotho/Tswana tribes. On their turn, the Batlokwa drove off the Bafokeng of Sebetoane from Kurutlele (Biddulpsberg) near

Senekal, who, in their effort to escape the pursuit by the AmaNdebele forces, eventually landed up in the Caprivi (Dreyer & Kilby 2003).

This period of unrest directly affected the peoples of the Free State and Northern Cape, resulting in the displacement of scores of tribesmen, women and children. The stronger tribal groups, such as the AmaNdebele of Mzilikazi, assimilated many of these refugees.

Early European missionaries and travellers ventured into the interior of the country during the 19th century (Dreyer 2001) and the Rev James Archbell established the missionary at Thaba Nchu by 1834. Several of the marauding hordes affected the lives of the Batswana people living at Dithakong near the mission station of Robert and Mary Moffat near Kuruman.

LOCALITY

De Beers Exploration is planning diamond prospecting at the farm Tafelkop 1154 in the Bloemfontein district situated near Petrusburg (Map 1). The prospecting will be done on a 78ha piece of land at the foot of the hill (Tafelkop) (Map 2&3).

The farm is reached via the S581 gravel road from a turn-off from the N8 main road to Petrusburg.

The following GPS co-ordinates were taken (Cape Scale) (Surveyor-General 1973): (Map 2&5).

Van Heerdens Dam	29°18'35"S	025°37'54"E	Alt 1365m (Figs.1&2).
Graves (±16)	29°18'43"S	025°37'54"E	Alt 1370m (Figs.3-5).
Point A2	29°19'36"S	025°38'58"E	Alt 1369m (Fig.6).
Donga	29°19'38"S	025°37'57"E	Alt 1394m (Figs.7&8).
Point B4	29°19'39"S	025°37'53"E	Alt 1405m (Figs.9-11).
Water course	29°19'42"S	025°38'18"E	Alt 1388m (Figs.12&13).
Tafelkop	29°20'51"S	025°37'47"E	Alt 1388m (Figs.1&6).

FINDS

According to the owner of the neighbouring farm, Van Heerdens Dam 369, there was a considerable scatter of “Boer War blikkies” at one place. During the site visit I could still find a few fragments of the heavy soldered bully beef type metal containers. There is a cluster of about 16 stone covered graves nearby, which are heavily overgrown and seem to be very old. The farmer, Mr Koos Oosthuizen (76), also speaks of a skirmish that took place on Van Heerdens Dam. It is alleged that there are a number of sangars on the low lying hill nearby (29°20'51”S.025°37'47”E. Altitude 1388m) (Map 3). The farmer tells about a visit many years ago by an old Anglo-Boer War veteran who spoke about a shoot-out on the farm and also remarked about a British officer who had been buried there.

The occurrence was reported to Mr Steve Watt of Kwazulu-Natal who is an authority on British Anglo-Boer War graves. He responded as follows:

“I have found no evidence about a ‘skirmish’ in the Petrusburg district. The area was under the ‘control’ of the South African Constabulary (SAC) which was stationed in posts between Bloemfontein and Kimberley. I can only guess that the “blikkies” (food cans) was perhaps from an encampment of SAC. What I am saying is just speculation. About the graves, they could be of black people (labourers) who were in the employment of the SAC. Johan Loock is an experienced observer and maybe he can give you more information.”

Dr Johan Loock, the local Anglo-Boer War expert from Bloemfontein, is familiar with the farm but cannot recall any knowledge of a skirmish at this locality (Personal communication).

Several heritage impact assessments on residential developments at Petrusburg and borrow pit mining along the N8 main road to Kimberley recorded a variety of Middle Stone Age lithic material (Dreyer 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2012, 2013). These finds include individual hand axes (± 10 cm in length) from the later phase of the Early Stone Age (Acheulean) and collections of Middle Stone Age flakes and cores. The majority of the finds represent heavily patinated stone flakes and scrapers, together with a single well-used upper grinding stone.

In the present case at Tafelkop, heavily patinated Middle Stone Age flakes and flaked cores are found in an area along the water course (W) (Fig.14) and near the donga at Point D (Fig.15) (Map 3). The artefacts seem to be a fairly general occurrence, limited to the specific area. The flakes appear to be insignificant.

No other cultural or historical remains were found.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Heavily patinated stone flakes and scrapers occur at the site. The distribution of the stone artefacts seem to be a fairly general occurrence and taking into

consideration that only a relatively small part of the area will be affected, the cultural material could be evaluated as insignificant.

There will be no major impact caused by the prospecting developments on any heritage resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The impact resulting from the new developments on the archaeological and heritage resources is considered to be of minor significance.

There are no obvious reasons to delay further planning of the developments at the specific site.

I recommend that the planning of the proposed prospecting developments may proceed.

MITIGATION

No mitigation measures will be required in case of the present developments.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank officials from De Beers Exploration for giving directions to the sites.

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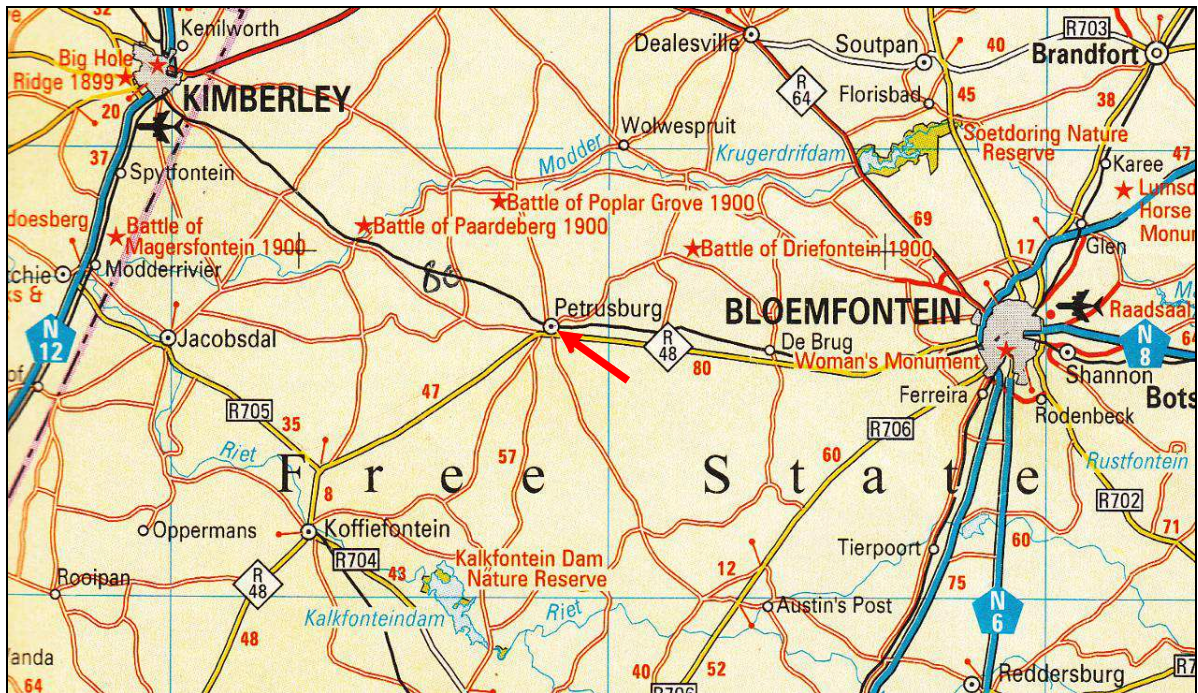
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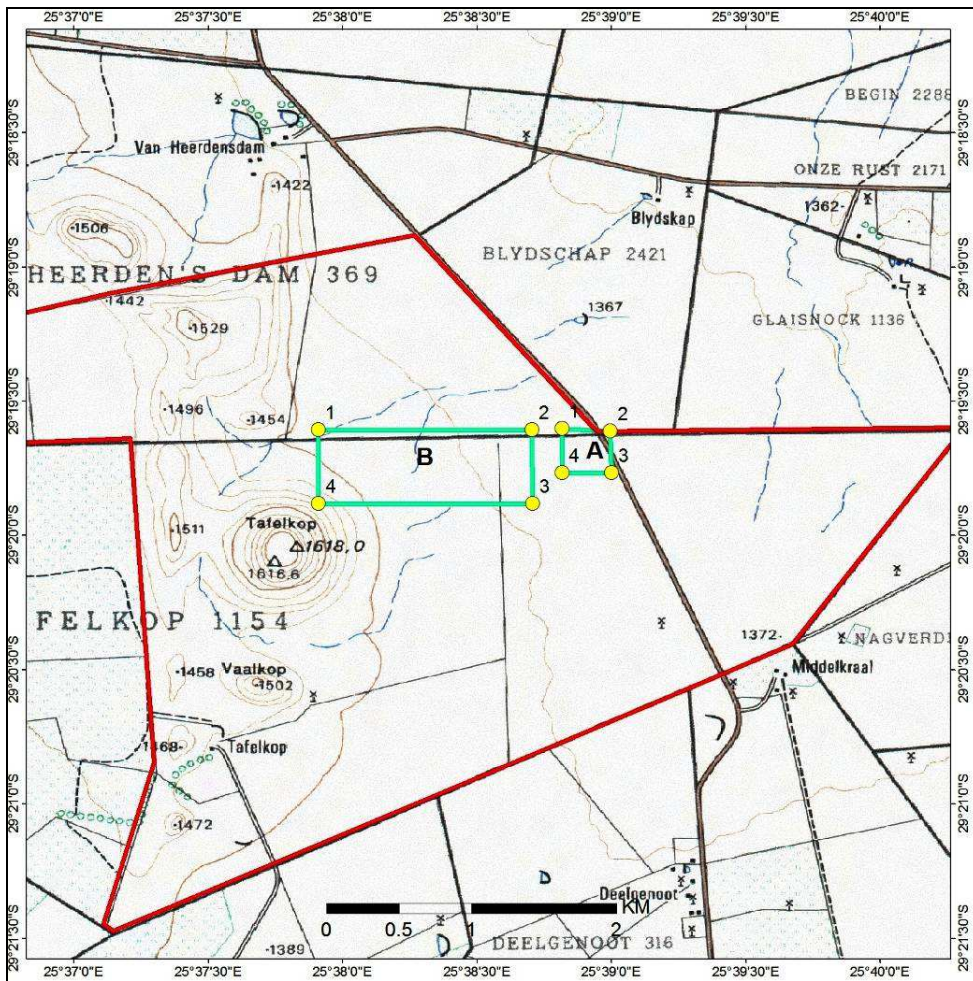
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Map 1 Locality of Petrusburg in relation to Bloemfontein.



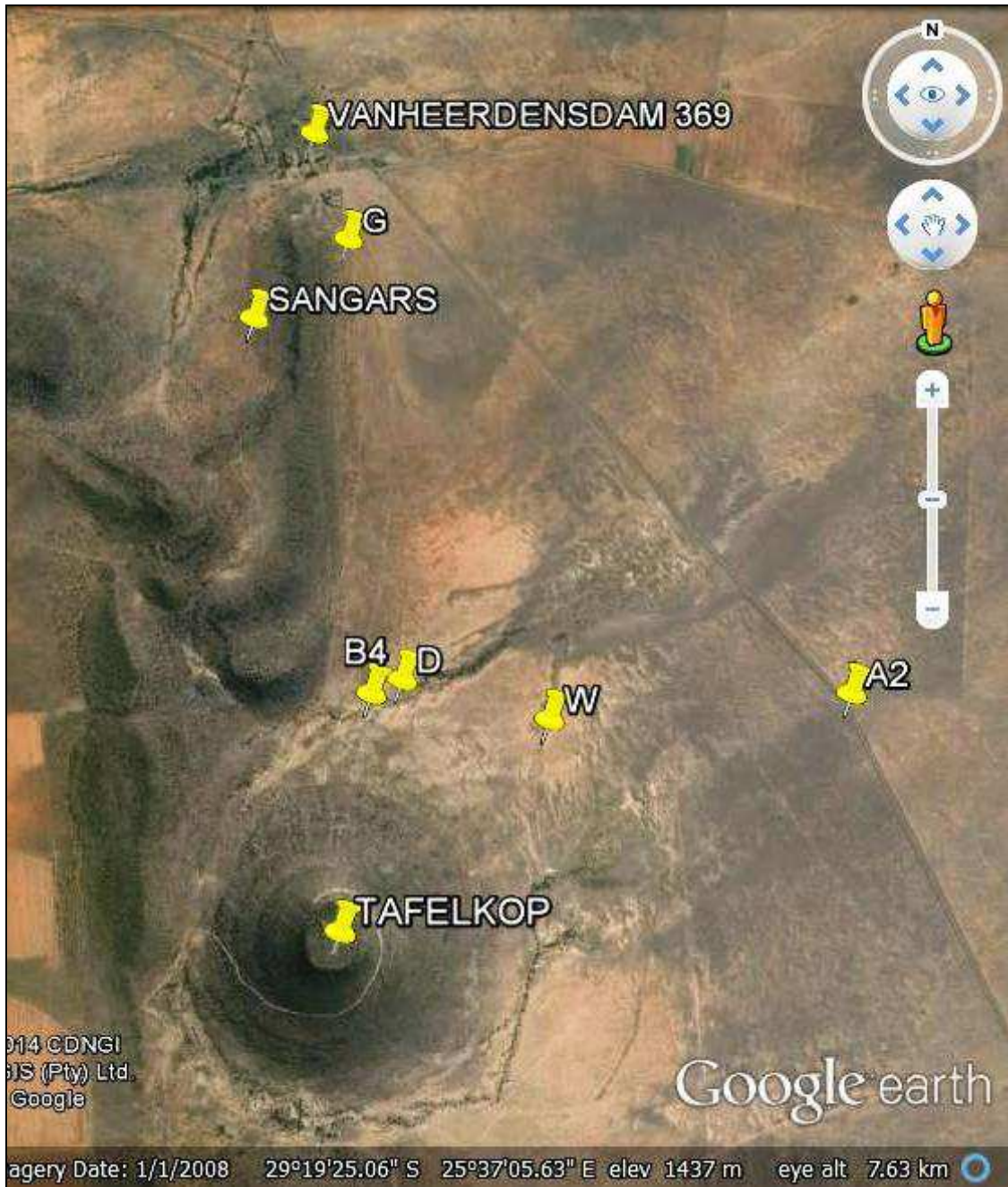
Fig.1 Site of the British camp at Van Heerdens Dam 369 facing Tafelkop at the back.



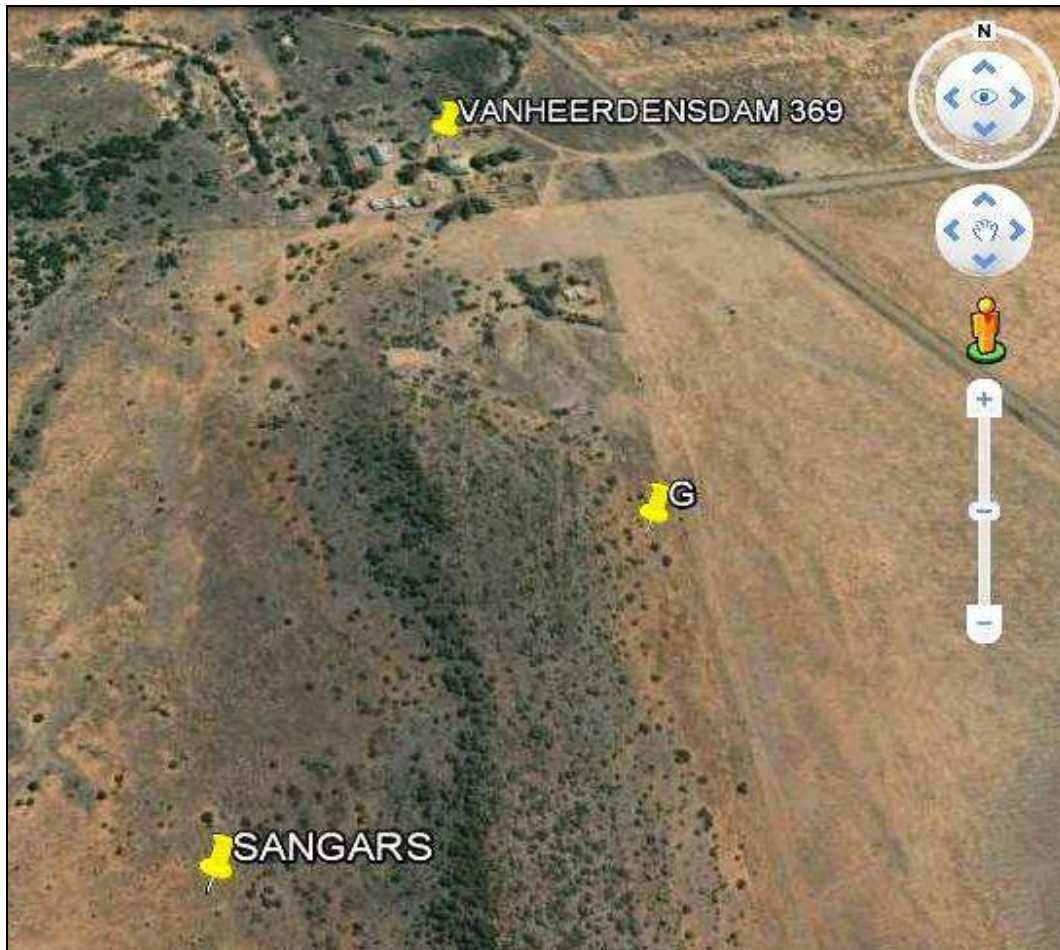
Map 2 Area A & B at Tafelkop 1154 near Petrusburg.



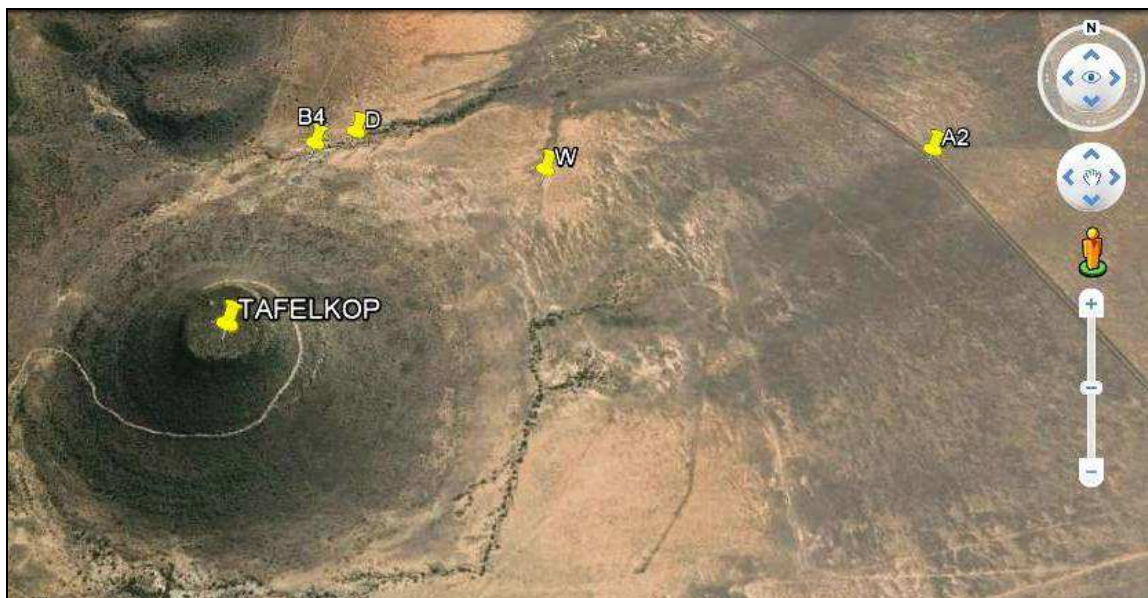
Fig. 2 Hill containing sangars at Van Heerdens Dam 369, Petrusburg.



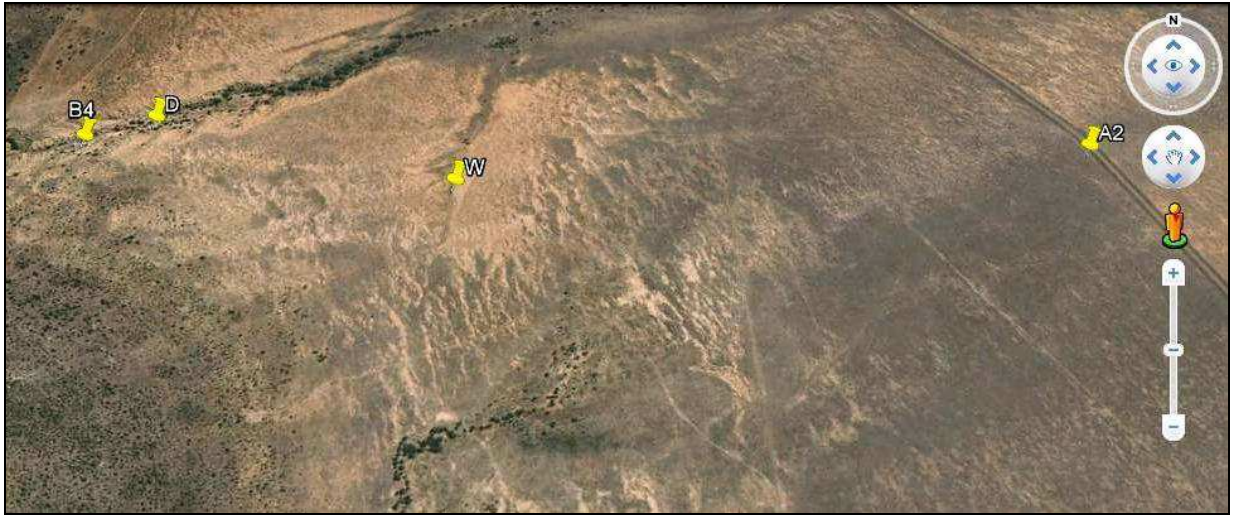
Map 3 The area between Van Heerdens Dam 369 and Tafelkop near Petrusburg.
 GPS coordinates indicated.
 D = donga.
 W = water course.



Map 4 Locality of the graves and Sangars at Van Heerdens Dam, Petrusburg.



Map 5 Placing of the GPS coordinates in relation to Tafelkop.



Map 6 Placing of the GPS coordinates at the farm Tafelkop 1154 near Petrusburg.



Fig.3 Stone covered grave at Van Heerdensdam 369, Petrusburg.



Fig.4 Another stone covered grave at Van Heerensdam 369, Petrusburg.



Fig.5 One of about 16 stone covered graves at Van Heerensdam 369, Petrusburg.



Fig.6 Point A2 facing west with Tafelkop at the back.



Fig.7 The donga at Point D (Maps 3&5).



Fig.8 On the edge of the donga at Point D (Maps 3&5).



Fig.9 Boulders at Point B4 (Maps 3&5).



Fig.10 Boulders near the donga at Point B4 (Maps 3&5).



Fig.11 Boulders near the donga at Point B4 (Maps 3&5).



Fig.12 The water course near Point W (Maps 3&5).



Fig.13 The water course near Point W (Maps 3&5).



Fig.14 Stone flakes found near Point W along the water course (Pocket knife = 84mm).



Fig.15 Stone flakes found between the water course (W) and the donga (D).
(Pocket knife = 84mm)