



Archaetnos Culture & Cultural  
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**A HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE  
SITE OF SARDELLI'S SHOP AT SABIEPOORT, ALSO KNOWN AS THE SITE  
WHERE BILL SANDERSON WAS INTERRED, LOWER SABIE DISTRICT,  
KRUGER NATIONAL PARK**

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## OPSOMMING

Steinaecker's Horse was 'n vrywilligerseenheid wat tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902) aan die kant van die Britte geveg het. Die terrein van Sardelli se winkel, sowat 7 km suidoos van die Onder-Sabie ruskamp in die Nasionale Krugerwildtuin, 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 hierdie terrein deur die soldate gebruik is om Bill Sanderson te interneer. Daar is ook twee ander terreine waar Sardelli winkels gehad het, nl. by Gomondwane en nabij aan die Krokodilrivier.

Die terrein het onder bevel gestaan van Edward George Gray, wat 'n kaptein in die Steinaecker's Horse eenheid was. Sy bynaam was 'Gaza' omdat hy voor die oorlog in Portugees-Oos-Afrika, in die Gaza distrik, werksaam was. Hy het bevel gevoer oor drie van buiteposte van die eenheid, naamlik die nabijgeleë Gaza Gray terrein (waarvan hierdie winkel van Sardelli waarskynlik 'n verlengstuk was), die een by Gomondwane en die een by Krokodilbrug. Na afloop van die oorlog het hy 'n veldwagter in die Sabie Wildreservaat (later Krugerwildtuin) geword.

Die Gaza Gray terrein is relatief groot en bestaan uit vier gedeeltes, maar die terrein van Sardelli se winkel kan waarskynlik as vyfde gedeelte daaraan toegevoeg word. Dit is slegs ongeveer 2,5 km noordwes van die sentrale gedeelte van die Gaza Gray terrein geleë. Laasgenoemde is 'n groot terrein wat verskeie beeskrale bevat en wat oor meer as 'n kilometer in deursnit strek. Gray en ander plaaslike inwoners het reeds voor die oorlog hier beeste aangehou. Dit wil voorkom asof die suidelike gedeelte merendeels deur die soldate van die Steinaecker's Horse eenheid benut is.

Die terrein van Sardelli se winkel beslaan ongeveer 220 m in deursnit en bevat die reste van die winkel asook twee ashope en kultuurvoorwerpe wat verspreid op die terrein voorkom. Dit blyk dat hier ook plaaslike inwoners gewoon het en dat hulle waarskynlik dieselfde groep was wat op Gaza Gray terrein teenwoordig was. Sardelli het dus met hulle geassosieer.

Historiese inligting dui aan die Steinaecker's Horse die winkel gebruik het om Bill Sanderson te interneer. Dimitri Sardelli was 'n lid van die Steinaecker's Horse eenheid.

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 ouer kultuurprodukte en dit wat met die winkel verband hou. Die navorsing het voorts ten doel om die kulturele materiaal wat opgegrawe is met die materiaal, wat by ander Steinaecker's Horse terreine gevind is, te vergelyk.

Tydens die opgrawingseisoen is vyf opgravings gedoen. Drie hiervan was op die reste van die winkel en twee by ashope. Daar is altesaam 1868 artefakte blootgelê. Dit is relatief baie vir so 'n klein terrein, maar tog meer as wat byvoorbeeld tydens die 2015 seisoen by die Gaza Gray terrein opgegrawe is. Tog is die oorgrote meerderheid hiervan afkomstig van die ashope, wat beteken dat die kulturele materiaal vanaf die winkel self, relatief min is. Dit kan daarvan toegeskryf word dat voorwerpe wat

steeds nuttig was, verwyder is toe die terrein verlaat is of omdat baie hiervan reeds weggespoel het, aangesien die terrein by die samevloeiing van twee riviere geleë is.

Geen voorwerpe met 'n definitiewe militêre oorsprong is op hier opgegrawe nie, hoewel verskeie daarvan op die Gaza Gray terrein gevind is. Hierdie voorwerpe sou onteeseglik daarop dui dat die soldate van Steinaecker's Horse op die terrein teenwoordig was. Relatief min Europese glasvoorwerpe is gevind en geen Europese keramiekvoorwerpe is opgegrawe nie. Die glasvoorwerpe dateer uit die laat negentiende en vroeë twintigste eeu en stem ooreen met voorwerpe wat op ander terreine, wat met Steinaecker's Horse verbind word, ingesamel is.

Nie-Europese voorwerpe, hoofsaaklik potwerk, is ook gevind. Hierdie voorwerpe stem ooreen met dit wat by die Gaza Gray terrein opgegrawe is en dui daarop dat 'n Nguni/ Tsonga groep die terrein bewoon het. Hierdie mense was waarskynlik voor die oorlog reeds daar teenwoordig en het moontlik as arbeiders vir Sardelli, maar ook vir Gaza Gray gedien en het laasgenoemde se beeste opgepas. Tydens die oorlog het hulle waarskynlik hierdie taak voortgesit, maar is dit ook uitgebrei om beeste, wat van die Boere gekonfiskeer is, op te pas.

Omdat Sardelli by Steinaecker's Horse aangesluit het, is die winkeltjie waarskynlik ten tyde van die oorlog ontruim, behalwe in die tyd toe Sanderson daar aangehou is. Enkele voorwerpe wat ná die oorlog dateer, is ook gevind. Dit dui daarop dat, net soos wat die geval met die Noordelike buitepos naby Letaba was, ook hierdie terrein na die oorlog hergebruik is.

## SUMMARY

Steinaecker's Horse was a voluntary unit who fought on the side of the British during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). The site of Sardelli's Shop, situated more or less 7 km to the south-east of the Lower Sabie rest camp in the Kruger National Park, 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 used by the soldiers to intern Bill Sanderson. There also is two other sites where Sardelli had shops, namely at Gomondwane and close to the Crocodile River.

The site was under the command of Edward George Gray who was a captain in the Steinaecker's Horse unit. He was nicknamed 'Gaza' as he used to work in the Gaza district of Portuguese East Africa before the War. He was in command of three outposts of Steinaecker's Horse namely the nearby Gaza Gray post (this shop of Sardelli was likely associated herewith), the one at Gomondwane and the one at Crocodile Bridge. After the War he became a game ranger in the Sabie Game Reserve (later Kruger Park).

The Gaza Gray site is relatively large and consist of four sections, but the site of Sardelli's Shop can perhaps be added as a fifth section. It is only about 2,5 km northwest of the main section of the Gaza Gray site. The latter is a large site containing various cattle kraals/ middens and which stretches over a kilometre in diameter. Gray and other local inhabitants kept cattle here even before the War. It seems as if the southern section was mostly used by the soldiers of the Steinaecker's Horse unit.

The site of Sardelli's Shop has a diameter of approximately 220 m and contains the remains of the shop and at least two refuse middens as well as cultutural material spread over the area. It seems that local people also stayed here en that the likely was the same group who were present on the GazaGray site. Sardilli thus associated with them.

Historical information indicates that Steinaecker's Horse used the shop to intern Bill Sanderson. Dimitri Sardelli and his associate, Charlie Wodlands, were both menmbers of the Steinaecker's Horse unit.

The site was excavated in order to learn more about Steinaecker's Horse, but also to distinguish between remains from this unit and cultural remains from the period before the War and those from the shop. The research also aimed at comparing cultural material from the site with that of other excavated Steinaecker's Horse sites.

During the excavation season, five excavations were conducted. Three of these were on the remains of the shop and two at refuse middens. A total number of 1868 artefacts were uncovered. This is a reasonably large number for such a small site, but nevertheless ore than what was excavated during the 2015 season on the Gaza Gray site. Most of these came from the middens, meaning that those from the shop were relatively few. This likely is due to cultural material being rmoved from site as it was still usable or since it may have been washed away as the site is located at the confluence of two rovers.

No artefacts with a specific military origin were excavated here, but many such material were found at the Gaza Gray site. Such artefacts would undoubtedly corroborate that the soldiers of Steinaecker's Horse were present here. No European ceramics and relatively few European glass objects were found. These objects does date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and are similar to those found on other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse.

Non-European artefacts, mainly traditional) pottery, were also found. These are similar to what was excavated at the Gaza Gray site and indicate that the site was inhabited by a Nguni/ Tsonga group. These people probably already stayed here before the War and it is likely that they worked for Gaza Gray and attended to his cattle. During the War they most likely continued with this task but also had to attend to cattle which were confiscated from the Boers.

Since Sardelli joined Steinaecker's Horse, the shop was likely vacated during the War, except for the period when Sanderson was jailed there. A few cultural objects dating to after the War, was also found. It indicates that, just like at the Northernmost outpost of Steinaecker's Horse, close to Letaba, this site was also reused after the war.

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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).

Dimitri Sadelli, also called Sardelli the Greek, operated three shops in the Lowveld, together with his business associates, Tom Paulin and Charlie Woodlands. Two of these shops were utilised by Steinaecker's Horse, namely the one at Gomondwane and the one close to the Sabi Poort. At the latter a farmer with the name of Bill Sanderson was interned by Steinaecker's Horse during the War (Pienaar 2012: 321, 415; Woolmore 2006: 282).

This site is close to the Lower Sabie rest camp. It lies approximately 2,5 km northwest of the Gaza Gray site, which was one of several outposts manned by them in order to safeguard the area from the Boers. The latter site was mainly used as a cattle outpost, where livestock, confiscated from the Boers, were kept (Pienaar 1990: 618). The closeness of the shop to this site, probably means that it can be seen as an extension thereof. The Sardelli's Shop site is reasonably small, consisting of the remnants of a building, at least two refuse middens and cultural material spread out over an area of approximately 220 m in diameter. It is one of eleven sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse that physically have been located.

There is no historical information suggesting that the site was used for any other purpose than the jailing of Sanderson. It therefore seems as if the Steinaecker's Horse utilisation thereof was brief, which likely would not have resulted in many cultural objects being left here during the time. Nevertheless, it may contain unique information about the daily lifestyle and routine of the inhabitants of such a military site (see for instance Pelser & 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.

A research project regarding the Steinaecker's Horse has been running in the Kruger National Park for many years. An excavation permit (PermitID: 1177), was obtained from the South African Heritage Resources Agency to conduct the research.

The site of the shop was located during 2010. Other sites associated with the Steinaecker's Horse unit was excavated, namely:

- The northermost or Mkhadzi outpost close to Letaba during 1997, 2000 and 2002,
- The Ngotsi Mouth camp during 2008 and 2013,
- The Sabi Bridge post during 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009, and
- The Gaza Gray post during 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015.

The research resulted in interesting information of the unit, specifically concerning the role local black people played at these outposts (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; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2006: 36-37; Van

Vollenhoven et.al. 2007: 38-39; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2008: 42-43; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2009: 43-44; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2010: 80-82; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2011: 90; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2012: 73-74; Van Vollenhoven 2013: 82-86; Van Vollenhoven 2014: 71-75; Van Vollenhoven 2015: 75-84; Van Vollenhoven 2016: 83-88).

A comparison of material from these sites with that at Sardelli's Shop may result in learning more in this regard. Therefore it was decided to excavate the shop. Only one excavation season was necessary, which occurred in August 2016. This report deals with the findings thereof.

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 since 2002 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.

## 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. The sites at Sabi Bridge and Ngotso Mouth seem not to indicate such a differentiation although the Sabie River might have been a divider at the Sabi Bridge site. As Ngotso Mouth was only used as temporary camp at a place where local people already stayed, it explains the lack of differentiation. This social differentiation also existed at the Gaza Gray site.

After completion of the excavations at Letaba, which then was the only site associated with Steinaecker's Horse researched and confirmed as being a Steinaecker's Horse site, it was deemed important to contextualise this information by comparing the similarities and differences other such sites show in this regard. Also, too little was known about the everyday life and circumstances of the unit, especially relating to comparative samples.

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 was done with the Sabi Bridge, Gaza Gray and Ngotso Mouth sites. The research at the Sardelli's Shop site 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 ground-breaking method has already leaded to vital new information about the participation of those groups whose 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 at first only concentrated on the Northern outpost at Letaba. Research was later also done at the Sabi Bridge, Gaza Gray and Ngotsos Mouth sites. However the point has been reached where not much more could be learned from these sites. 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. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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. Research on the Sabi Bridge, Gaza Gray and Ngotsos Mouth sites were the following steps, but the story was still incomplete. 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.
- e. A display of the research done at the northernmost outpost 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 were 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 will undoubtedly become available from the latest research.

- f. Natural factors, such as erosion and the burrowing of certain animals, proved a major threat to the sites that have 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 history of these sites as well as for research and management purposes.
- g. Soldiers of Steinaecker's Horse, black volunteers and local inhabitants occupied the Northern outpost, the Gaza Gray post and the Sabi Bridge site, whereas the Ngotso Mouth site seems to have been occupied by local people and were only used as a camp site by Steinaecker's Horse. A comparison of excavated material coming from different refuse middens at the Northern outpost and Gaza Gray post showed social differences between the groups. This could not be determined from the other two sites. Subsequently the research on more 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.
- h. 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.
- i. 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 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. Objectives & key questions of the Steinaecker's Horse research project**

#### **3.1 Main aim**

To make use of archaeological methods, supplemented by other historical sources, to write a comprehensive and representative history of the Steinaecker's Horse unit in the Lowveld in order to preserve and conserve this part of history.

#### **3.2 Objectives**

- To corroborate the legitimacy of different sites currently documented in the historical literature as being associated with Steinaecker's Horse

- To obtain additional background information on the Steinaecker's Horse unit by using archival and other historical sources
- To determine the geographical extent and influence of the activities of Steinaecker's Horse in the Kruger National Park
- To obtain information on the participation and role of black people on the sites, especially in connection with their lifestyle and their position regarding the Anglo-Boer War as a whole, including the social differentiation between the different units and people at Steinaecker's Horse sites
- To recommend preservation and management measures for the different sites
- To identify research questions, gaps and opportunities relating to the different sites
- To make recommendations for cultural tourism opportunities and the management of the different sites

### **3.3 Key questions**

- Does the archaeological data from different sites (Gaza Gray, Ngotso Mouth, Gomondwane and Sardelli's Shop) support the historical information that these are associated with Steinaecker's Horse?
- Does the collection of archival and other historical information relating to the Steinaecker's Horse unit add to the comprehensive and representative writing of the history of Steinaecker's Horse?
- Is it possible to identify additional sites used by Steinaecker's Horse by using archaeological and historical sources and thereby assist in determining the geographical extent and influence of the activities of the unit in the Kruger National Park?
- Does the comparison of excavated material from each particular site as well as from the different sites with each other, assist in obtaining information on the participation and role of black people on these sites, especially in relation to their lifestyle and their position regarding the Anglo-Boer War as a whole, including the social differentiation between the different units and people at Steinaecker's Horse sites?
- Can the study of each site add to the monitoring of erosion and site degradation in order to be able to recommend preservation and heritage management measures?
- Will the research assist in identifying further research questions, gaps and opportunities relating to the different sites?

- To what extent can the assessment of the sites, regarding location, accessibility and extent of cultural material and features be used to recommend opportunities for cultural tourism and the management of thereof?

#### **4. Hypothesis: the Sardelli's Shop site**

It is believed that Sardelli's Shop is one of the sites that was utilised by Steinaecker's Horse during the Anglo-Boer War. The research was therefore undertaken to show a connection between historical information and the archaeological evidence with regards to Steinaecker's Horse at the Sardelli's Shop site.

##### **4.1 Aims**

- The collection of historical information relating to the Steinaecker's Horse unit and specifically Sardelli's Shop.
- The collection of archaeological data from the site.
- The comparison of excavated material from the different sites, to determine whether there was social differentiation between the different units at the 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.
- To determine whether it is possible to distinguish between cultural material associated with Steinaecker's Horse and material from earlier cultural activities on the site.
- The archaeological investigation of possible activity areas on the site.
- To determine the extent of the site of Sardelli's Shop.
- To monitor potential erosion on the site.

##### **4.2. 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 for a long time 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, the Gaza gray outpost and Ngotsos Mouth camp as well as at Sardelli's shop, 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.

## **5. Motivation for the research**

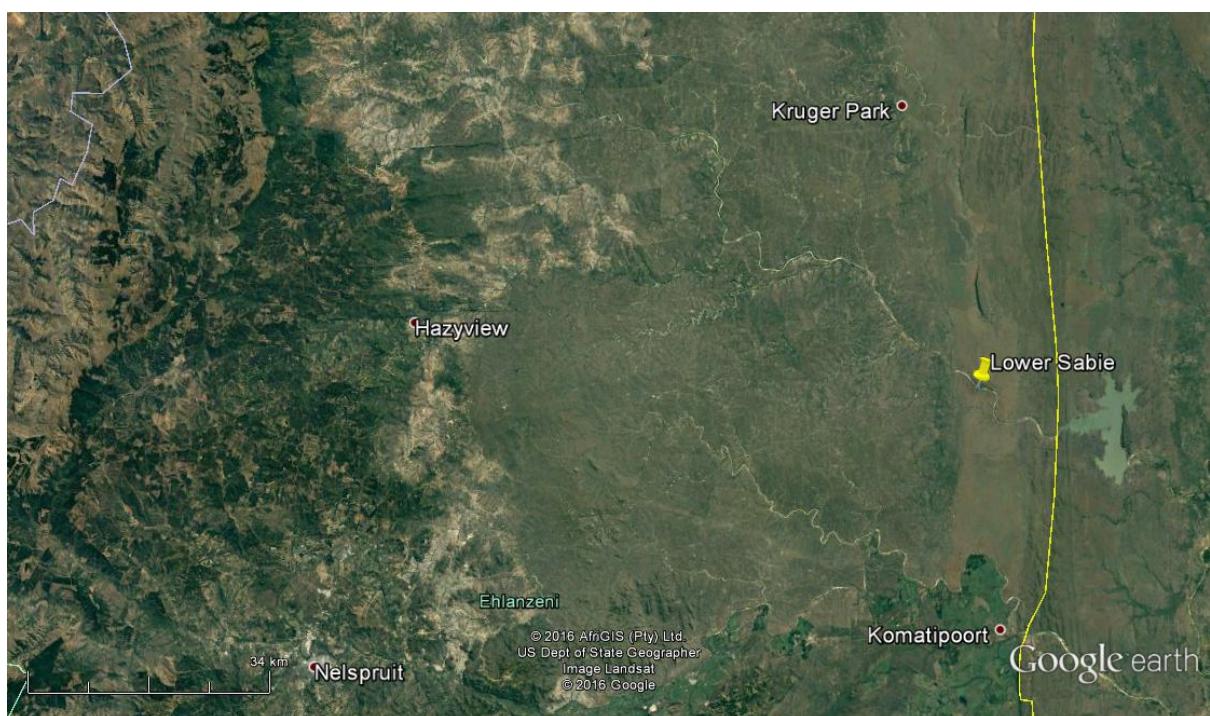
- 5.1 The importance of Steinaecker's Horse in the history of the Lowveld was clearly stated in the previous reports (Van Vollenhoven et. al. 1998a: 3; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2001: 2, 8, 54; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003a: 5, 7; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003b: 2-3, 55; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2006: 5, 26-27; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2007: 5, 27-28; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2008: 5, 27-28; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2009: 5, 25-26; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2010: 5, 27-28, 85; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2011: 11, 36-37; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2012: 27-31; Van Vollenhoven 2013: 11-12; Van Vollenhoven 2014: 11-12, 27-31; Van Vollenhoven 2015: 12-13, 28-33; Van Vollenhoven 2016: 12-13, 28-34), which deals with the excavations on the Letaba site in 1997, 2000 and 2002, the survey of Steinaecker's Horse sites done in 2003, the excavations on the Sabi Bridge site in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009, the excavations on the Ngotsos Mouth site in 2008 and 2013 as well as the excavations at the Gaza Gray site in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015. 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.
- 5.2 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 24 cm 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.
- 5.3 The uniqueness of the site, being a site with perhaps only a brief period of occupation by Steinaecker's Horse, makes it an important site to be investigated.
- 5.4 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 site of Sardelli's Shop falls within all three these categories.
- 5.5 The Steinaecker's Horse project remains the only one of this extent researching an aspect of the Anglo-Boer War by archaeological means. Other archaeological projects on this time period concentrated on single sites or only a few related ones.

## **6. Location**

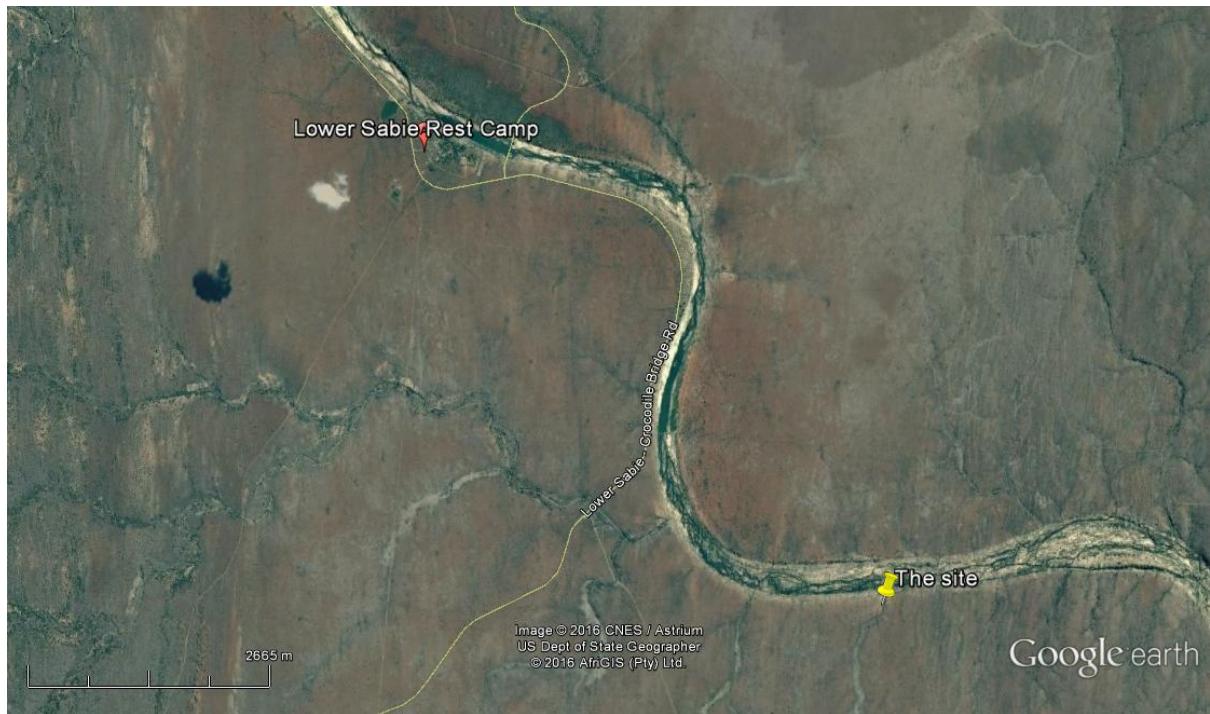
As indicated, Sardelli had three shops in the area today known as the Kruger National Park. This site, also called the one where Bill Sanderson was interned, is situated more or less 7 km south-east of the Lower Sabie rest camp in the Kruger National Park (Figure 1-2). It lies off the tourist route, but is accessible through a ranger's path.

The site is situated approximately 2 km north-west of the Gaza Gray site of Steinaecer's Horse (Figure 3). This is more or less 170 m from the southern bank of the Sabie River and it is right next to (west) of the bank of a small tributary thereof. The site is located on map number 2531BB and 2532AA, Onder-Sabie, of the South African 1:50 000 topographic series.

It consists of the remains of the shop, at least two refuse middens and cultural material spread out over an area of about 220 m (Figure 3-4). GPS coordinates for the site are as follows: 25°09'59.20"S and 31°57'56.90"E



**Figure 1: Location of the Lower Sabie Rest Camp the Kruger National Park, Mpumalanga.**



**Figure 2: Location of the site of Sardelli's Shop, where Bill Sanderson was interned, close to Lower Sabie in the Kruger National Park.**



**Figure 3: Location of the Sardelli's shop site in relation to the Gaza Gray site.**



**Figure 4: View of the site indicating the shop remains.**

## 7. Site description

At the time when the field work was done, the site was fairly open with little ground cover, due to the drought. There were large dry patches almost completely without any vegetation with a few spots being overgrown with medium tall grass. A few large trees and some low bushes and shrubs are found all over the site. It was therefore not possible to determine the extent of disturbance on site due to human activities of the past.

The remains of the shop, seems to consist of a concrete floor, with no walls visible. This lies right on the western bank of the small stream which forms the eastern border of the site. The Sabie River runs towards the north. Two middens were identified, both towards the south on slightly elevated areas containing a concentration of cultural artefacts. The first is about 75 m from the shop and the second approximately 150 m (see Figure 10). The latter also is overgrown by grass and stand out from the barren surroundings. This suggests past disturbance.

In between these three features, cultural material are being found scattered over the surface in a diameter of roundabout 220 m, stretching further towards the south. Although spread out over a reasonably large area, the objects are not found in abundance. European and indigenous artefacts are intermingled, but it does seem as if the first mentioned are concentrated around the shop, with the latter being concentrated at the middens.

The scatter of cultural material gives the impression that during the rainfall season these are washed from the middens towards the Sabie River. As a result the middens are deflated to some extent. The site therefore is under the same threat that other

Steinaecker's Horse sites. The openness of the site made it easy to determine areas containing cultural deposits, and therefore also areas on the site to be excavated. Since it is a small site lacking large quantities of features and deposit, one excavation season was deemed ample.

A gravel road runs from north to south, about 400 m towards the east of the site. The site is basically flat, with a slight fall towards both rivers. The name of the tributary of the Sabie River could not be found on any map, but the road is called the Nhlanganzwani fire break which may be the name of this non-perennial stream. The Sabie River is one of the main water courses in the south of the Kruger National Park.

## 8. Historical context

### 8.1 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. 2001; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003b; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2006; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2007; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2008; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2009; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2010; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2011; Van Vollenhoven & Pelser 2012; Van Vollenhoven 2013; Van Vollenhoven 2014; Van Vollenhoven 2015; Van Vollenhoven 2016). 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, TAD, SS0, R 8496/00).

A total number of 39 block house lines were erected across South Africa (Van Vollenhoven 1992: 178). 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).

Since 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 (Hattingh & Wessels 1999: 41; 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 (NAD, KAD, CO 2/1/1/46, C 14/29/8, 1902). For this purpose the British erected several blockhouses along the railway line at Nelspruit, Kaapmuiden, Malelane, Komatiport 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 (NAD, KAD, CO 2/1/1/46, C 14/29/8, 1902).

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 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 Komatiport. 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, TAD, AMPT PUBS 83C). The Boers evacuated Komatiport on 18 September 1900 (Tempelhoff 1982: 9).

General R Pole-Carew reached Komatiport 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 Komatiport 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 Komatiport, but they were prevented from doing so (NAD, TAD, 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 Gaza Gray outpost of Steinaecker's Horse, which is the one that was excavated between 2010 and 2012, and again in 2014, 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).

## 8.2 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: 20-23; 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, SAD, MHG 32062). His father was Colonel Baron Von Steinaecker of the Prussian Guard and his mother Baroness Von Thumen of Liegnitz. He received his military training at the Royal Cadet Corps in Waklstatt and Berlin. His military career started in 1871 when he entered the Leiz Grenadiers of the Prussian Army. He resigned eight years later to join the ruling prince of Battenberg (Bulgaria), Prince Alexander, in his military voyages. During the 1880 revolution he was promoted to a commander (Uys 1992: 227; Conway 1978: 30; Jones 1996: 6). In 1881 he married the daughter of Rath Kaegler of Berlin and the countess Olhefska (SA National Museum of Military History, newsletter).

The next thing known about him is that he came to Southern Africa in 1886, working as a cartographer in German South West Africa (Uys 1992:227). 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. 1998a: 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 (NAD, KNAD, CSO 1554, 1898/1896, 1898; NAD, KNAD, SNA I/1/269, 2930/1897, 1897-1898; NAD, KNAD, MJPW 31, LW 1628/1897, 1897; NAD, KNAD, MJPW 31, LW 1629/1897, 1897; NAD, KNAD, MJPW 31, LW 1630/1897, 1897; NAD, KNAD, MJPW 32, LW 1802//1898, 1898). He stayed in 52 Aitken Street

(NAD, KNAD, SGO, III/1/140, SG 1060/1900, 1900; Jones 1996: 6). He became a British subject on 29 June 1897 (NAD, KNAD, CSO 1517, 1897/3852, 29.07.1897).

One of the things he did during this time was to speculate with real estate as a number of properties were transferred in his name (NAD, KNAD, SGO III/1/125, SG 1454/1898, 1898; NAD, KNAD, SGO III/1/197, SG 1749/1909, 1904; NAD, KNAD, MJPW 32, LW 1802/1898, 1898, NAD, KNAD, SG 1454/1898, 1898; NAD, KNAD, SGO III/1/156, SG 3231/1/1902, 1902). 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 (NAD, KNAD, MSC 1/254, 187, 1898-1899; 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)<sup>1</sup> 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. If this is true, Von Steinaecker probably seized the opportunity to impress the British. According to Matsebula (1972: 87) Steinaecker recruited seven men for this task (but he most likely counted Von Steinaecker as one of the seven). 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 (culvert) 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.

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1 Should be Nomahasha.

The blowing up of the bridge halted traffic for fourteen days and was more of a problem to the British than to the Boers (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; Pienaar 2012: 413).

Von Steinaecker was promoted to lieutenant colonel towards the end of the War and he received the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) on 23 June 1902 (<http://londongazette.co.uk>: 2336). During 1907 he tried to raise a permanent commission with the British Army, but was unsuccessful (NAD, TAD, SNA 321, NA 1321/06).

After the War he tried to establish his unit as a permanent border guard. According to Wolhuter (2010: 82) this indeed happened. 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. During 1907 he attempted for a last time to obtain a permanent commission from the British Army, but was unsuccessful (NAD, TAD, SNA 321, NA 1321/06, 04.04.1906).

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, TAD, 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 anymore. He eventually got permission from the Law Department to keep these without a permit (NAD, TAD, 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 send to him. The letter was written on the farm London, where he resided, close to the town of Bushbuck Ridge (NAD, TAD, 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, TAD, 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, SAD, 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, SAD, 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, SAD, 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 Champagne<sup>2</sup> in the Lydenburg district (Bornman 2004: 5; Cattrick 1959: 182; Pienaar 2012: 423, 505).

On 24 April 1917 he requested the Governor-General that a letter he wrote to his sister in Germany, could be delivered to her. It probably was necessary to request this as Germany was at war with Britain during this time (World War I). The letter was addressed to Baroness Adeleide von Steinaecker and the request was granted on 31 May 1917 (NAD, SAD, GG 536, 9/11/49, 1917). It is uncertain whether she ever received the letter as Von Steinaecker died before the request was granted.

After having a difference in opinion with his employer (Travers) he was asked to leave the farm. He refused and the assistance of the police was called in. Before they arrived Von Steinaecker poisoned himself with strychnine on 30 April 1917 (Bornman 2004: 5; Pienaar 2012: 423). He is buried near Acornhoek (NAD, SAD, MHG 32062; Van Vollenhoven et.al. 1998a: 9), but it is uncertain exactly where his grave is situated.

### ***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

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<sup>2</sup> Some sources indicate the name of the farm as being Castle, but information from the Deeds Indicate that no farm with such a name are to be found in this area.

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 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, TAD, SS0, R 8433X/00).

After the capture of Komatipoort by the British in September 1900, the unit was send 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; Pienaar 2012: 635). 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 1996: 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. This was drawn down by straps. He wore a flat Guardsman's cap with silver lace decorations. On his feet he wore riding breeches and Wellington boots with enormous silver box spurs. A large sabre buckled to his waist and adorned with silver aiguillettes rounded off the uniform (Cattrick 1959: 180; Wolhuter 2010: 51).

Despite this apparent flamboyance, his men did not always speak highly of him. He was nicknamed 'Old Stinky' (Wolhuter 2010: 52; Pienaar 2012: 417). Wolhuter (2010: 50-51) describes him as follows: "He was a pompous little cock-sparrow of a man; standing some five foot three inches in his boots; spare and wiry-looking in figure and of possibly 120 lbs. of fighting weight. The most striking feature of his lean cadaverous face, from which, under bushy brows, gleamed two truculent black eyes, was a vast and remarkable moustache, which, well waxed and turned up at its ends, extended to some nine inches on either side of an aggressive jowl, but failed to conceal a mouth from which the front teeth, all but a few yellow and broken fangs, had vanished."

A complete list of the members of Steinaecker's Horse is available in the British National Archives (BNA, WO 126/141). It is also published in Woolmore (2006: 138-322).

### ***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 (Pienaar 2012: 413).

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; Pienaar 2012: 414).

According to some historians, Steinaecker's Horse was reputedly engaged in some controversial activities, such as looting (Jones 1996: 103). A safe full of jewels was for instance looted from Bremersdorp (Wolhuter 2010: 71). 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, TAD, 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, TAD, 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 (Gray). Pienaar (2012: 413) also indicated that they frequently seized herds of cattle.

Carruthers & Pienaar (2012: 474) describes an incident where they confiscated cattle on the Portuguese side of the border, which was a contravention of international treaties. The Portuguese Governor complained to the British and the people had to be compensated. Steinaecker's Horse also armed local people which sometimes had tragic outcomes (Pienaar 2012: 643).

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 they dealt with Bill Sanderson also indicate that Steinaecker's Horse did not adhere to the strict rules of the British Army (see below). 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, TAD, 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 Webbstock and a certain Holgate. He also states that one person was killed in the process of capturing the enemy (NAD, TAD, 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 (he signs his name differently in the same document, HO and HD) 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, TAD, PMO 28, PM 1973/01, Letter from Captain H.O. 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, TAD, 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, TAD, 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 AD Greenhill-Gardyne also wrote a statement regarding the incident, but without providing any new information (NAD, TAD, 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, TAD, 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. Fort Mpisane was one of the various forts Von Steinaecker had erected in the Lowveld (Bornman 2004: 2; Pienaar 2012: 418-419;). 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 (Pienaar 2012: 236; Bornman 2004: 5). Many Shangane troops captured here were also executed by the Boers as it were agreed between the Boers and British that no black people would be allowed to partake in the War. This was only done after lengthy correspondence between the Boer commander, Assistant-Commandant B Viljoen, and Lord H Kitchener (NAD, TAD, FK 1821, 1901; Viljoen 1902: 260-261; Meijer 2000: 223).

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). The Special Squadron however operated as a separate unit, although it used the name Steinaecker's Horse.

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

British archival records indicate that 337 members of Steinaecker's Horse received special mention after the war. Of these 327 qualified for the King's South African medal (BNA, WO 100/365). Eight members of the unit were specifically mentioned by Lord Kitchener (NAD, TAD, FK 1911, 1902). These are troopers DE Wilson and F

Hennessey on 8 March 1902, Lieutenant WP Robertson and trooper WW Griffin on 1 June 1902 and captains HF Francis, AD Greenhill-Gardyne and lieutenants JM Dallamore and D Buchanan on 23 June 1902 (Woolmore 2006: 336).

Von Steinaecker himself also received mention in the London Gazette of 8 April 1902 (<http://www.londongazette.co.uk>: 3975). Apart from Von Steinaecker, Lieutenant JA Bailie was the only other member of Steinaecker's Horse who received the DSO, namely on 31 October 1902. Sergeant WS Haines received the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Captains JB Holgate and HO Webbstock was recommended for orders by Von Steinaecker, but it seems as if they did not receive it (Woolmore 2006: 336).

The members of the unit who attended the coronation of king Edward VII was Von Steinaecker, lieutenant JA Bailie, sergeant-major R McGregor, corporals C Syers and AH Carter, and troopers H Seaton, AW Sinclair, B McKevitt, H Vickreys, R Payne, AWF Kegel and RV James (BNA, WO 127/23).

During the war 39 members of Steinaecker's Horse died, of which only 11 died during skirmishes with the enemy. Other causes of death include malaria, lions, crocodiles, and suicide (Woolmore 2006: 337). Some of the deceases were buried at Komatipoort (NAD, TAD, TPS 37, TA 4823/4) and one is buried in the military cemetery at Waterval-Onder (Personal communication: WJ Verwoerd).

A few other members of the unit are mentioned in literature other than Woolmore's (2006) book on Steinaecker's Horse. These include Percy (PW or Pump) Willis and his brother BC (Clinkers), Maj R Robertson who was in charge of the blockhouse at Sabi Bridge, D Sardelli, Tom Paulin, Charlie Woodlands,<sup>3</sup> John Edmund Delacoer Travers and Ben Harper (Pienaar 2012: 243, 417, 422-423). Pump Willis used to handle the water pump at Komatipoort (Pienaar 2012: 422).

### ***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. 1998a: 8-10).

Stirling (1907: 273) indicated that they had more than a dozen permanent posts. According to Wolhuter (2010: 174) they had pickets along the Lebombo Mountains and wrote that it was his task to patrol the country up to the Olifants River and decide on suitable places where pickets could be established (2010: 55-56).

Unfortunately very little is known about the location of these outposts. Twelve of these are shown on a map (Woolmore 2006: 79), 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

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<sup>3</sup> In his book, Woolmore lists the names of the members of Steinaecker's Horse, but one of Harper, Paulin or Woodlands are listed. They therefore most likely never enlisted.

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, Muntshe 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 Ngotsi Mouth, a site at Metsi-Metsi and the Northernmost (Letaba or Makhadzi) outpost (Pienaar 1990: 345; Personal comment: U de V Pienaar; Pienaar 2012: 414). The Metsi-Metsi site apparently was only manned by black members of the Steinaecker's Horse unit (Pienaar 2012: 414).

Another known site is that of Fort Mpisane at Bushbuckridge just west of the Park (Pienaar 1990: 345). Woolmore (2006: 74) and Wolhuter (2010: 56) also mentions a post named Kilo 104. This one is also mentioned by Wolhuter as is a picket at Nwanedzi (Wolhuter 2010: 58, 78). This brings the total of Steinaecker's Horse sites to twenty of which eleven are located within the boundaries of the Kruger National Park.

Some old piquet's 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. 1996, 1998a, 2001, 2003b). From this it was found that most of the dateable artefacts found at the site represent the period of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> to the Early 20<sup>th</sup> 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). Wolhuter (2010: 64) indicates that his patrols took him as far north as Letaba.

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; Van Vollenhoven 2004). 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).

From Komatipoort supplies were sent to the other outposts (Wolhuter 2010: 77). Wolhuter (2010: 53) indicates that his first job as member of Steinaecker's Horse was to make a road between the bridge over the Komati River and Mateveskom.

Muntshe is described as an outpost of Steinaecker's Horse during 1900-1902. The site is probably to the north or northwest of Muntshekop, north of Lower Sabie. Apparently the site was used by various people as a camping spot (Pienaar 1990: 346-347, 617; Pienaar 2012: 254, 374; 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).

Pienaar (2012:319) also makes mention of a site on the western bank of the Mbiyamithi Spruit, west of the Môrester windmill. He indicates that many relics from the Anglo-Boer War was found here.

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 1899and also had two other shops in the vicinity. This shop was made of corrugated iron, but it not the one that was investigated here. It was commandeered for use as an outpost by Steinaecker's Horse during the War with Captain EG (Gaza) Gray as the officer in command of this outpost also called Gomondwane (Pienaar 1990: 398, 460, 619; Pienaar 2012: 415; Personal comment: U de V Pienaar; Stevenson-Hamilton 1952: 28). Remains of Eucalyptus trees, planted by Sardelli, is the only thing that remained on site. It also has been commemorated by a plaque (Figure 5-7). This site was visited in 2014 in order to find remains and take a co-ordinate: GPS - 25°15'31.3"S; 31°50'36.4"E.



**Figure 5: Stump of one of the Eucalyptus trees at the site of Sardelli's shop at Gomondwane.**



**Figure 6: Another stump of one of the Eucalyptus trees at the site of Sardelli's shop at Gomondwane.**



**Figure 7: Plaque at the site of Sardelli's shop at Gomondwane.**

Wolhuter was placed in charge of a picket at Ngomandwane with twenty men attached to him (2010: 72; 1948: 62). It is not certain whether this is the same one as the

mentioned one at Gomondwane. He described 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 next site is the one called the Gaza Gray outpost. Captain Gray used this outpost between 1899 and 1902 (Woolmore 2006: 198; also see below). The place where Bill Sanderson was interned, another one of Sardelli's shops, is a site near Matjozeni, north of the Gaza Gray outpost, but south of Lower Sabie (Wolhuter 2012: 416????; also see below).

Bottelkop is an observation post on the south-western slope of a hill at Komatiopoort, inside the border of the Kruger National Park. The site consists of fortification walls and the remains of glass bottles, hence the name (Figure 8). This site was visited in 2014 in order to find remains and take a co-ordinate: GPS - 25°25'36.8"S; 31°58'29.6"E.



**Figure 8: Glass bottle shards, dating the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century found at Bottelkop.**

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,<sup>4</sup> 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; Pienaar 2012: 684).

Outspan is a known camp site used by travellers along the East Coast trade route. It was used by Steinaecker's Horse during 1901. It is situated to the east of Pretoriuskop and south of Shitlhaye (Pienaar 1990: 345, 618, 620).

<sup>4</sup> The names of only 25 of these are known, as indicated earlier.

Pienaar (1990: 353) also makes mention of an outpost close to the Olifants River. It is believed that this is a temporary camp used by members of the unit on their way to take supplies to the Northern outpost. This is believed to be the Ngotso Mouth camp. Very little evidence regarding this site is found in historical sources.

The famous game ranger and member of Steinaecker's Horse, Harry Wolhuter, mentions that he camped alongside a river on his way to some of the outposts of Steinaecker's Horse in the north. He named the river Ngotso after one of the indigenous people who guided them to the Olifants River (Wolhuter 1948: 45; Pienaar 2012: 422). Today the camp at the confluence of the Ngotso and Olifants Rivers is called Balule, which is the Shangane name for elephant (Van Warmelo 1961: 38). Before the current Olifants camp was built, the Balule camp was called Olifants camp (Joubert 2012: 589). Pienaar (2012: 549) indicates that Wolhuter also established an outpost here when he was working as a ranger in the park, but he most likely just continued using the one he used during the War

Wolhuter indicates that there was a military pontoon across the Olifants River (Wolhuter 2010: 91). Unfortunately it is not known whether this was at this specific site, but if that was the case it might well have been one of the tasks of Steinaecker's Horse to guard the pontoon. In 1929 a pontoon was put into work at Balule (Joubert 212: 602). It seems very likely that this could be the original military pontoon referred to by Wolhuter, which was repaired. It therefore seems very possible this is at the site that was excavated during 2008 and 2013. Pienaar (2012: 236, 479) indicates that Wolhuter, who was a sergeant in Steinaecker's Horse, served at various outposts namely Komatipoort, Sabi Bridge and various others, as far north as the Olifants River.

The Salitje outpost is also indicated on a loose map in Pienaar (2007). The site is situated west of the tourist road and east of the Hlekana River (Pienaar 1990:439). He also calls this the old Salitje outpost at Gabeni (Pienaar 1990:617).

It however is uncertain whether the site can be linked to Steinaecker's Horse. Pienaar does list it with the other Steinaecker's Horse sites, but also indicates that this is the place where people from Mozambique (Mafourteens) were recruited in the years before 1958 (Pienaar 1990:439). The site was found during 2014, but only a few glass shards were identified (Figure 9).



**Figure 9: A glass bottle top dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century identified at Salitje.**

It seems as if the Kilo 104<sup>5</sup> 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; Wolhuter 2010: 54-55). The site used to be the railhead and was situated between Sabi Bridge and Fort Mpisane, but after the bridge at the Sabi River was swept away, Sabi Bridge became the railhead (Wolhuter 2010: 55). This is one of the sites that could up to now not be physically located.<sup>6</sup> Pienaar (2007: 357; 2012: 562) indicated that this was at Newington, 120 km from Komatiport.<sup>7</sup> This is outside of the Park.

There also was a picket close to Nwanedzi. This was the first outpost established by Wolhuter and where he also got sick of malaria and black water (Wolhuter 2010: 58). No more information is available on this site.

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; Pienaar 2012: 562). Harry Wolhuter assisted in the building of the blockhouse (Pienaar 2012: 479). This site had also been excavated. Wolhuter (2010: 54) described how he assisted in erecting the blockhouse. At first this was the furthest point along the railway line where Steinaecker's Horse operated (Wolhuter 2010: 54). 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

5 The name certainly does not make sense as measurements during the War was done in miles and not kilometres. However, Wolhuter (2010: 74) gives the name as Kilometre 104.

6 In April 2015 the railway line from the Sabi Bridge was followed for some distance in a northerly direction. The only possibility of this site that was found, it at Huhla Station about 1 km north of the railway bridge over the Sabie River.

7 There is therefore in any case a discrepancy between 104 and 120 km, which presently cannot be explained.

this garrison for a short period of time (Pienaar 1990: 343-349; Personal communication: U de V Pienaar).

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. He apparently drank himself to death. The job was then taken over by Trooper Bertram Churchill (Clinkers) Willis (Woolmore 2006: 18; Pienaar 2012: 422). After the bridge was swept away Sabi Bridge served as the railhead (Wolhuter 2010: 74).

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; Pienaar 2012: 360-361). It had a veranda which was pleasant and cool, with a direct river frontage. By 1906 he had another office (Skukuza Archives, photo M1-75), but it is not sure what happened to the blockhouse.

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. Wolhuter (2010: 75) wrote that he stayed in a hut at Sabi Bridge. He also described that they used the stable as mess to have a Christmas dinner once.

### ***The Gaza Gray outpost***

The site that was excavated, is only about 2,5 km from the Gaza Gray outpost. The latter is a large site stretching over more than a kilometre. Due to this closeness it is believed that the site where Bull Sanderson was interned, at Sardelli's shop, may have been just an extension of the other. Therefore historical information on the Gaza Gray site is being discussed in detail.

The site is situated to the south of the Lower Sabie rest camp and is named after Edward George Gray who was a captain in the Steinaecker's Horse unit. He was nicknamed Gaza as he used to work in the Gaza district in Portuguese East Africa before the War (Woolmore 2006:198). He was in command of three outposts of Steinaecker's Horse namely this one, the nearby one at Gomondwane (where Sardelli had another shop) and the one at Crocodile Bridge. He joined the Steinaecker's Horse unit on 20 August 1900 (Pienaar 2012: 475; Woolmore 2006: 198).

He used it mainly to keep his cattle in a kraal (Pienaar 1990: 618). Gray was fluent in Tsonga (Pienaar 2012: 475) a fact that most likely served him well in this area. The local people believed he had supernatural powers and called him Mastutele – the quiet one (Pienaar 2012: 476). With him on site stayed some local people 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.

Pienaar (2012: 476, 547) however indicates that this was not the military outpost, but one located at the current Lower Sabie rest camp and erected only after he had been appointed as ranger. He does however identify the ‘Gaza Gray’ site as one 5 km north of the Nhlanganswani Dam, where Gray kept his cattle. It therefore seems that Gray may not have stayed on this site, but he would have had people working for him there as well as soldiers to guard the cattle confiscated during the War.

Wolhuter (1948: 57-59) indicates how they took possession of a herd of cattle belonging to Abel Erasmus and took it to Sabi Bridge. These were most likely his own breed of uniformly brown cattle with yellow muzzles as it is known that Steinaecker’s Horse took possession of them (Theunissen 2013: 4-5). The cattle were eventually handed over to the officer commanding the outpost at Gomondwane (Gray) and it is believed that they eventually ended up at the Gaza Gray outpost. This event subsequently led to the attack on Fort Mpisane, mentioned earlier (Theunissen 2013: 5).

After the War he became a game ranger in the Sabie Game Reserve (later Kruger Park). He was appointed on 12 August 1902 (Skukuza Archives, List of Rangers, 1902-1903). Gray was interested in the position as Warden in the Park after the death of Captain Francis. However, there were fears that this would rather encourage the hunting of game than the preservation thereof and he was therefore only appointed as ordinary ranger (Pienaar 2012: 236, 447, 684; Woolmore 2006: 198). He was the first ranger to be appointed by Colonel James Stevenson-Hamilton, namely on 29 July 1902<sup>8</sup> (Pienaar 2012: 456, 475). He resigned on 26 May 1903 to return to his former position (before the War) as recruitment officer for the mines (Pienaar 2012: 476).

### ***Sardelli’s Shop at the site where Bill Sanderson was interned***

Demetrius Sardelli was born in Greece on 25 October 1864. It is not known when he came to South Africa, but during the 1890’s he was a resident of the Lowveld. With his business partner, Tom Paulin, he stayed on the Lebombo range near Zenga Zenga Mountain. Here he sold very potent liquor made from jumbula trees. He later operated a trading post near the Sabie River. Apparently he had a band of native cutthroats who specialised in robbing Shangane mine workers when they returned home with their pay (Woolmore 2006: 282).

Pienaar (2012: 321) indicates that Charlie Woodlands was another business partner of Sardelli and that he always had a pipe clamped in his slobbering mouth. They built a number of these shops, but Pienaar indicates that Sardelli had the eucalyptus trees (see above) planted at the one at Gomondwane, perhaps an indication that he resided there.

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<sup>8</sup> The date of 12 August 1902 is accepted as this was found in a primary source. It is however possible that the appointment was made on 29 July and only became official on 12 August.

It was believed in those days that these trees would prevent malaria (Pienaar 2012: 347, 355).

Sardelli had three shops. The first is the one at Gomondwane, the second the one that was excavated (at Sabiepoort) and the third was west of the current Nkongoma outpost, next to the Crocodile River. These wood and iron shops were apparently mainly erected to rob the black miners returning from the Witwatersrand of their money by selling wares of inferior quality and homemade alcoholic concoctions at high prices (Pienaar 2012: 321). The shop at Sabiepoort was made of corrugated iron and was physically located during 2010.

When the Anglo-Boer War broke out, he abandoned his shop at Gomondwane (and most likely the other as well) and cleared out for Delagoa Bay. With him was Woodlands who is said to have operated the store at Gomondwane. It perhaps indicates that he also resided there. It is said that only Sardelli and Woodlands money reached the bay. It is no wonder that Sardelli is described as being ‘as tough and brutal and cunning as a crocodile’ (Woolmore 2006: 282).

He must have returned as he enlisted into Steinaecker’s Horse at Komatipoort on 1 December 1900 and was listed as Trooper no. 1180. He had no former service indicating that he took this opportunity during turbulent times, perhaps to receive the pay and generous rations. His occupation is given as being a fitter and he is described as being 5’7” tall, with grey eyes and black hair. He had a daughter, Arhina Sardelli, from Durban who was indicated as his next of kin on the enrolment papers (Woolmore 2006: 282). The local people called him ‘Mfishane’ meaning the short little man (Pienaar 2012: 321).

At the Battle of Fort Mpisane on 7 August 1901, mentioned earlier, he went missing in action, but later rejoined. After the War he was discharged at Komatipoort on 20 August 1902. He qualified for the Queens South African medal with clasp Transvaal as well as the Kings South African medal with two date clasps (Woolmore 2006: 103, 282). It is strange that he received these as according to Pienaar (2012: 422) he absconded during the mentioned battle and sold rifles, which he had stolen from the unit, to local people.

After the War he was selling rifles to local black people and did whatever he could to make money, included working as a cattle herder near Mica. His date of death is unknown, but he died in a lunatic asylum (Woolmore 2006: 282; Pienaar 2012: 422).

His shop at the Sabie River was used as site where Bill Sanderson was interned during the War (Woolmore 2006: 282). Pienaar (2012: 321) describes this site as being 7,5 km south of the dam at the foot of Ndzengendzenge Hill in the Lebombo Mountains. This must be the same one as described by Woolmore as being at Zenga Zenga Mountain (see above) where he stayed. It therefore is uncertain at which of the stores he stayed permanently, but he most likely visited all three from time to time and would have stayed at each during these visits.

Bill Sanderson lived near Legogote on the farm Peebles with his brothers Bob and Tom. He was a farmer of Scottish descent and known as a skilled hunter. The Sanderson brothers were citizens of the Transvaal Republic (Woolmore 2006: 64).

Sanderson had a large number of friends and acquaintances among the Boer population (Woolmore 2006: 64; Bornman 2004: 4-5; Pienaar 2012: 416). The brothers were not prepared to fight against their British countrymen either and thus decided to stay neutral during the War. Since he understood their predicament, Field-Cornet<sup>9</sup> Abel Erasmus allowed them to stay neutral (Woolmore 2006: 64). Pienaar (2012: 416) however indicated that Bill had a short spell on Commando, but was allowed to return to his farm. These two accounts are perhaps similar as Sanderson may have stated his case with Erasmus, while on commando.

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 (Woolmore 2006: 282; Bornman 2004: 4-5; Pienaar 2012: 416).

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, some time during 1901, 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 (Bornman 2004: 4-5; Pienaar 2012: 416).

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 (Bornman 2004: 4-5; Pienaar 2012: 416; Woolmore 2006: 65).

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 (Bornman 2004: 4-5; Pienaar 2012: 416). Woolmore (2006: 65) specifically indicates that he was held in a wooden and iron shed on the Lebombo near Sabie Poort, where the local camp was commanded by Lieutenant (later captain) Gaza Gray. This shed refers to the one at Sabiepoort which was excavated and the information clearly indicates that Gaza Gray also was in command here.

Sanderson's 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; Pienaar 2012: 416).

It is said that after his internment in 1901, he was forced to become a member of Steinaecker's Horse (Pienaar 2012: 416), but his name is not to be found on the known

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<sup>9</sup> Field-Cornet is an administrative-military rank used in the old Transvaal Republic.

lists of the unit. When eventually released he returned to his farm where he had to start afresh due to the damage done and losing most of his livestock (Woolmore 2006: 65)

### ***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.<sup>10</sup> 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; Carruthers & Pienaar 2012: 455; Pienaar 2012: 546). Unfortunately nothing seems to be left of this blockhouse and the camp associated with it on the southern side of the river. Remains are however found on the northern side.

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; Pienaar 2012: 236, 475).

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 (Hamilton 1909: 61-68; Carruthers & Pienaar 2012: 445; Pienaar 2012: 685).

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

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10 The history of the establishment of the Park is described in full by Carruthers and Pienaar in Pienaar (2012).

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) and HC (Harry) Wolhuter - appointed 15 August 1902<sup>11</sup> (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; Pienaar 2012: 475, 479).

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. Members of some of the black military units, such as the Native Police (and perhaps even the Black Watch) were present at the different outposts manned by Steinaecker's Horse (Wolhuter 2010: 62, 85).

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). Wolhuter (2010: 85) writes that he appointed some of the members of the Native Police, who worked with him during the war, as game watchers. 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 (called the Adjutant), Major AD Greenhill-Gardyne (Wolhuter 2010: 11), 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.

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11 Pienaar (2012: 236) indicate the date as being 17 August 1902.

## **9. The excavations**

No grid was laid out over the site since specific features were excavated. A site map was however drafted (Figure 10). Two datum points were established to facilitate site drawing, and some of the excavation markers were also used as temporary reference points. A detailed map of the excavations at the shop was also done (Figure 11).

The GPS measurements of these points were taken for future reference. These are as follows:

A – 25°09' 59.8"S; 31°57'59.0"E – 2 m east of Excavation 2

B – 25°09'59.2"S; 31°57' 57.3"E – on northern line of Excavation 1, and 1 m west of Excavation 2. This became the permanent peg left on site.

Five excavations were conducted. These can be summarised as follows:

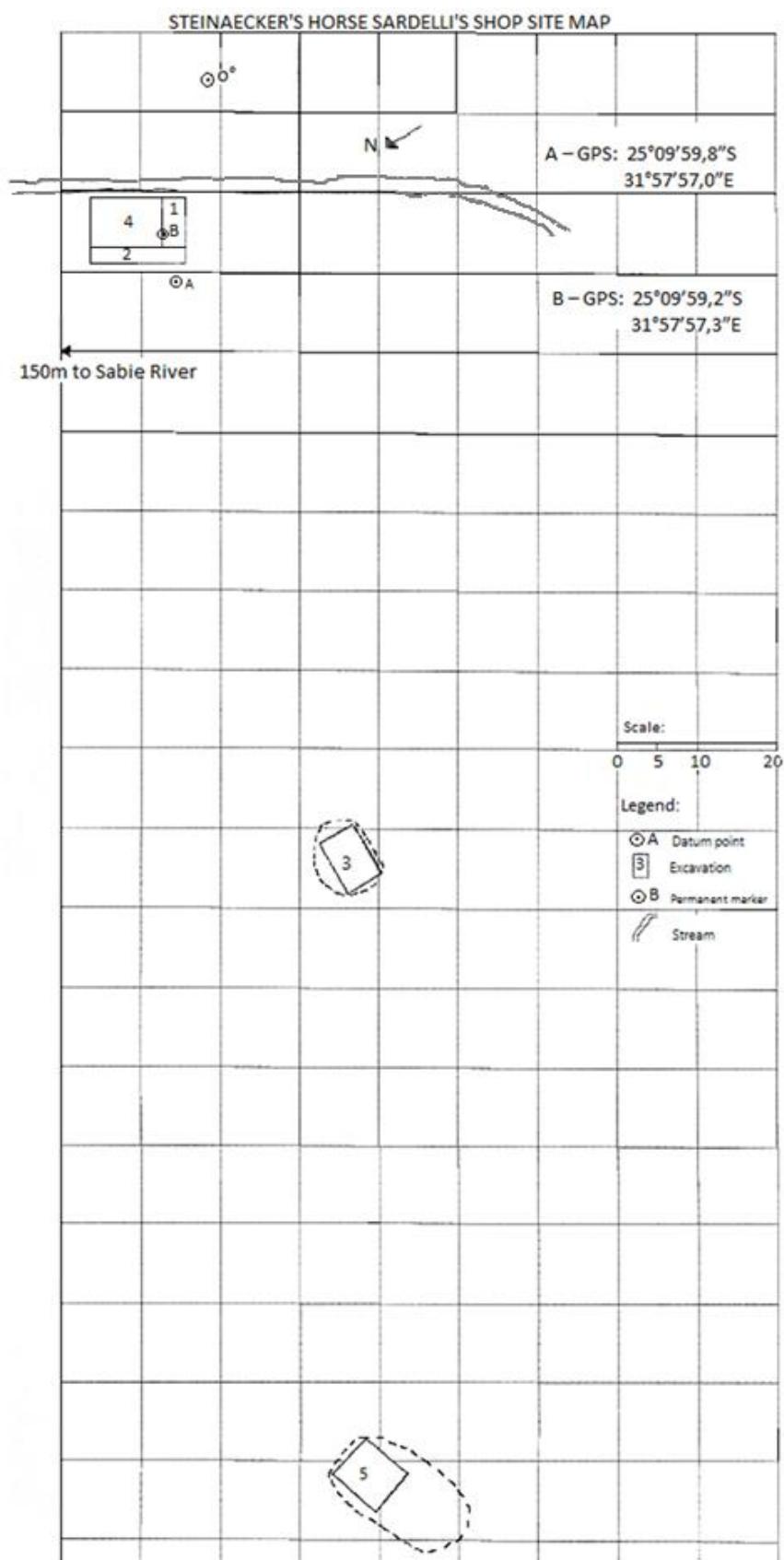
Excavation 1 – on the south-eastern section of the shop

Excavation 2 – on the western section of the shop

Excavation 3 – possible midden towards the west of the shop

Excavation 4 – on the north-eastern section of the shop

Excavation 5 – possible midden further towards the west of the shop



**Figure 10: Site map of the Steinaecker's Horse Sardelli's Shop site (the site where Bill Sanderson was interned).**

STEINAECER'S HORSE BILL SANDERSON SARDELLI'S SHOP

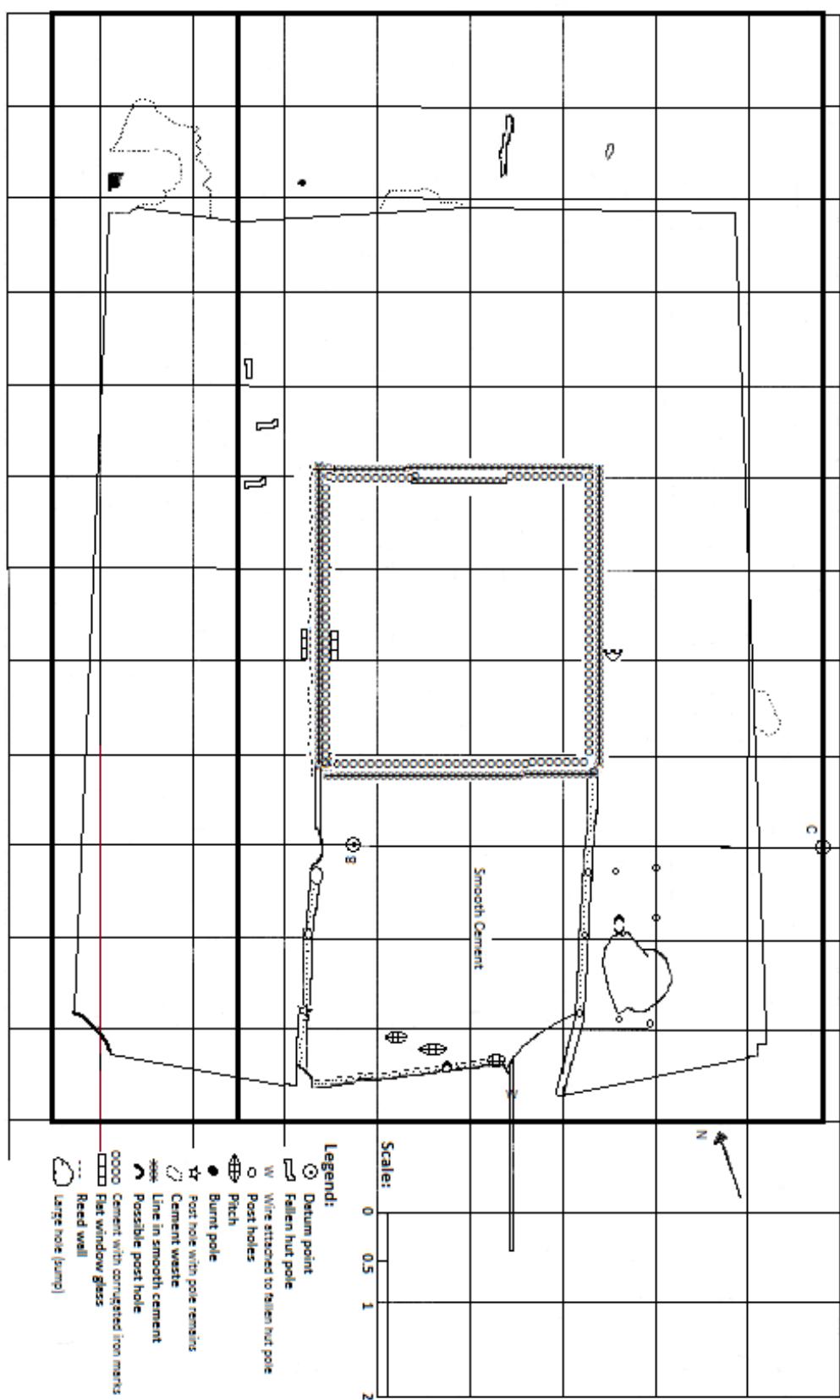


Figure11: Detailed map of the excavations at the shop.

## 9.1 The shop

### 9.1.1 Excavation 1

Excavation 1 was measured out on the south-eastern edge of what was visible of the concrete remains of the shop. It is in an east-west direction with sides of 5 x 2 m (Figure 12). The aim of the excavation was to unearth and investigate the remains of the shop and to collect cultural material which could be used to shed light on possible activity areas.

Loose soil and vegetation were removed at first and the artefacts lying on the surface was labelled as part of layer 1. Hereafter time was spent on levelling the excavation, which meant working down to the level where the concrete floor was exposed. It was soon realised that there were two different concrete floors, one was smooth and the other had a rough surface. The excavation was therefore extended up to Excavation 2 towards the west,in order to investigate the connection between the two. The excavation now had measurements of 6,25 x 2 m (Figure 13-14).



**Figure 12: The southern side of the shop remains, before Excavation 1 commenced.**



**Figure 13:** Excavtion 1 after being extended.



**Figure 14:** Excavation 1 after removing loose soil.

It was now realised that there was a depression toward the east of the excavation which looked like a deliberate feature (Figure 15). This was further investigated by excavation. There were also clear lines indicating different floors (Figure 16-19). These were investigated by brushing it clean. At least one loose piece of cement found

(several pieces were lying atound) had clear marks left by corrugated iron (Figure 20). The historical information (see above) indicated that the building was made of wood and corrugated iron, but it is also known that many such buildings were erected prior to and during the Anglo-Boer War.

Various post holes were unearthed. Six of these were around the above mentioned depression (Figure 21-27) and seven in between the different floors of which one still had the remains of the wooden post inside (Figure 28-29). The six holes in the concrete varies between 6 and 8 cm in diameter and they are 8 cm deep.

A number of leadwood poles were found lying around on site, and some of these seem to fit in these holes (Figure 30-31). Some of the poles were still bound together with wire, an indication that it was used as walling or fencing (Figure 32). One of these were found intact on the southern side of the concrete floor, although it had fallen (Figure 33-34).

On completion of the excavation, excluding the depression, the excavation was approximately 5 cm deep (Figure 35). It consisted of a mixture of dark brown and reddish soil, ending on the concrete floor. The texture of soil was soft and sandy with small granules towards the cement. The concrete is 3 cm at its thickest, but this is mostly at the rounded edges; otherwise it is 1 cm thick. No foundation was found.

Other observations made include spots of what looked like pitch on the smooth cement floor (Figure 36). This may have been used as waterproofing, which may indicate that the smooth cement section had a roof or it may have been used to waterproof the bottom of the walls. It was also clear that reed was used as walls or the room indicated by the smooth floor (Figure 37-38). It seems to have had a small entrance in the north-western corner, where a possible threshold was found, indicated by a difference in the cement levels (Figure 39).



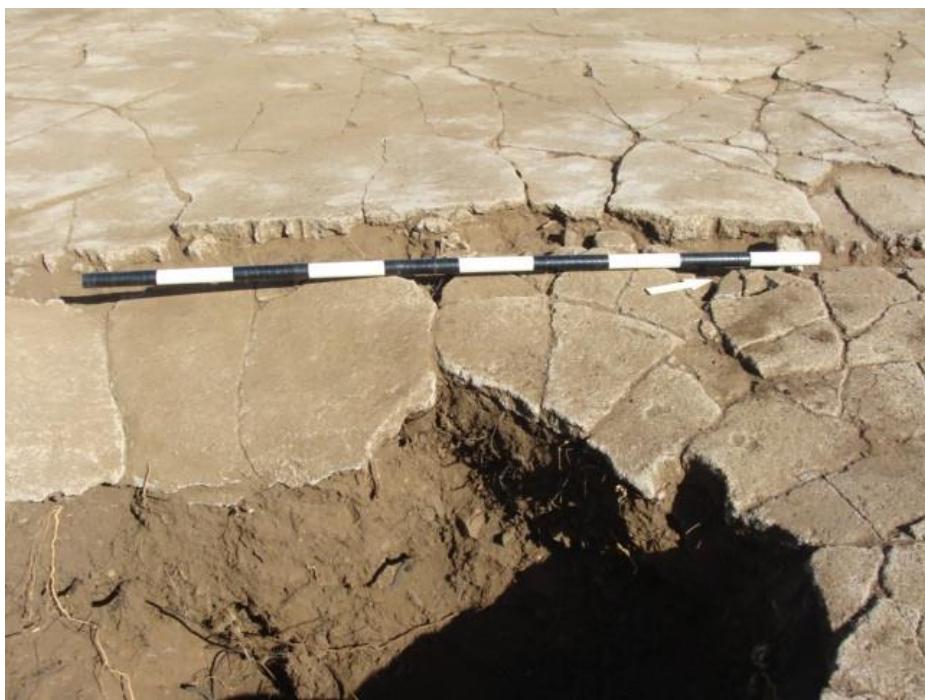
**Figure 15: Depression in the floor which was now excavated further.**



**Figure 16: Southern end of concrete floor.**



**Figure 17: Line in concrete where two floors meet. The one towards the east (right) is smooth whereas the other one (west) is more rough.**



**Figure 18:** Line where central (smooth) floor and eastern one meet.



**Figure 19:** Southern section of above line between floors.



**Figure 20:** Concrete indicating marks left by corrugated iron.



**Figure 21:** Post hole, north-east of the depression.



**Figure 22: Post hole, north-west of the depression. Due to the cave in of the concrete it looks like two holes.**



**Figure 23: The above post hole being ‘reconstructed’.**



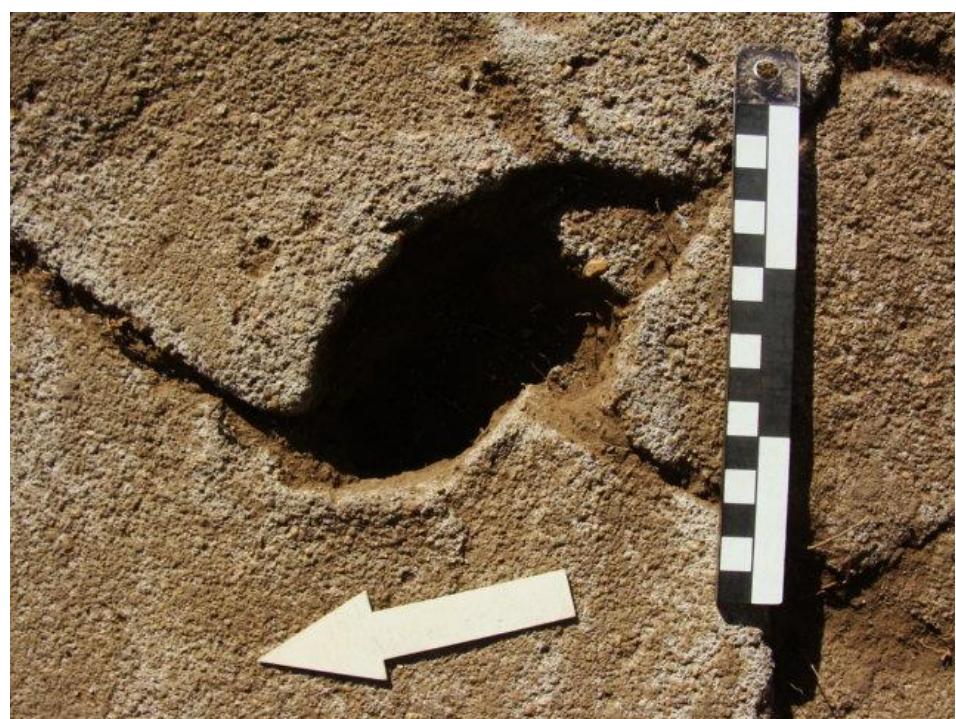
**Figure 24:** Post hole, further towards the north-east of the depression.



**Figure 25:** Post hole, further towards the north-west of the depression.



**Figure 26: Post hole, south-west of the depression.**



**Figure 27: Post hole, south-east of the depression.**



**Figure 28: Post hole with remains of wooden pole.**



**Figure 29: Detailed view of the above mentioned post hole.**



**Figure 30: Leadwood poles found on site.**



**Figure 31: The same poles, indicating hoe some may have been used as roof or corner poles.**



**Figure 32: Wire used to fix poles together.**



**Figure 33: Fallen wooden post at southern edge of concrete floor.**



**Figure 34:** The same wooden pole with wire still intact.



**Figure 35:** The completed Excavation 1.



**Figure 36: Possible pitch marks on floor.**



**Figure 37: Note the crack indicating the different floor levels. Also note the marks left by reed walls.**



**Figure 38:** Some reeds were cut close to the site and placed in the reed marks as illustration.



**Figure 39:** Note reeds marks to the left, the threshold to the right, with a post hole left thereof.

The mentioned depression on the eastern side of the excavation was now investigated further (Figure 40). This clearly was outside of the room indicated by the smooth floor. It soon became clear that it was a hole that was deliberately dug and that the cement floor was made around it. The edges of the cement were smoothed out, to form a proper edge around the hole. Indications of cement and lime (probably used to mix with cement) which had fallen into the hole during construction was also found, as was pieces of wire. This ended at a depth of 60 cm.

The hole was filled with stones which gives the impression that it was some kind of a drainage system for water. Eventually it was necessary to remove the broken edges of the cement to go deeper. This was however carefully marked and placed back when the excavation was back-filled. The stones also had to be removed to determine the depth of the hole. These were all marked with assistance of a 1 x 1 m grid being placed over the hole to facilitate the marking of the stones (Figure 41-44).

The hole was almost square as it had smoothed corners. It was 70 cm wide on both sections (N-S and E-W). In between the large stones were smaller ones as well as soil, but these may have landed in there over the years. The top of the large stones is 4 cm below the edge of the cement.

The final layer of rocks were found at a depth of 84 cm from the top of the cement (Figure 45). After removing these, the hole was 95 cm deep. (Figure 46), making the excavation 1 m deep at its deepest section.

Cultural material excavated included glass, metal and wood. These all came from the building material (see Appendix A). The building is interpreted after the discussion of the excavations. It suffice to indicate here that the hole was some kind of a drain and it seems as if the four post holes around it was used for some kind of a basin, perhaps the skin of an animal hanging in-between these four poles. The two on the northern side, together with the two further to the north, were likely used to fit a shelf on.



**Figure 40: The hole before it was deepened.**



**Figure 41: Grid placed over the hole. View from the south.**



**Figure 42: View from the east.**



**Figure 43:** Level where cultural material (wire, cement) ends.



**Figure 44:** Bottom of cultural layer. Note cement and lime beneath rock.



**Figure 45: Last layer of stones in the hole.**



**Figure 46: Completed excavation of the hole.**

#### 9.1.2 Excavation 2

Excavation 2 was initially measured out with sides of 5 x 2 m, but as more of the floor became open it was increased northwards to 12 x 2 m. It was laid out in a north-south

direction, initially on the southwestern corner of the building, but eventually it covered the entire western side thereof (Figure 47-49). The aim of the excavation was to investigate the concrete floor and find the western corner, but later on it was also to found the entire western foundation. It was also important to find cultural material.

Loose soil and vegetation were removed at first and the artefacts lying on the surface was labelled as part of layer 1. Hereafter time was spent on levelling the excavation, which ended upon the concrete floor. Sections around the floor was however excavated further in order to find foundations.



**Figure 47: Excavation 2 before excavation commenced.**



**Figure 48: Extended Excavation 2.**



**Figure 49: Excavation 2 after cleaning of surface.**

At the northern side the concrete seemed to stretch further, but after investigating it was clear that it consisted of a very thin layer of cement. Auger test were done to determine more or less how far this extends to the north, after which the excavation was extended

to the 12 m mark, indicated earlier. This cement either represents the area where the cement was mixed or the left-over cement was thrown here as extention to the building

Just as was the case with Excavation 1 it was determined that the building had no foundation. However, the soil on the south-western side of the floor seemed very hard, indicating that it was possibly compacted to ensure a good base for the laying of the concrete floor. The cement was between 1 and 4 cm thick, but the thicker section was only at the edges. It was opened up only 1 cm below the surface. The excavation eventually was 10 cm deep, meaning it went 5 cm below the concrete (Figure 50-55). The texture of the soil was soft and sandy, but hard and granular at the bottom, a result of the compacting thereof. The soil colour was between dark brown and reddish brown.

One wooden posts, partially burnst was unearthed towards the north of cement floor, almost on the north-western corner (Figure 56). This excavation also did not contain much cultural material. Only a few pieces of metal and wood and a piece of bakelite was found (see Appendix A). Except for the latter, these came from the building material.



**Figure 50: The completed Excavation 2, photographed from the south.**



**Figure 51:** Northern section of Excavation 2, photographed from the south.



**Figure 52:** Southern section of Excavation 2, photographed from the west.



**Figure 53:** Middle section of Excavation 2, photographed from the west.



**Figure 54:** Northern section of floor in Excavation 2, photographed from the west.



**Figure 55:** Northern section of Excavation 2, photographed from the west. Note the thin cement north of the cement floor.



**Figure 56:** Remains of partially burnt wooden post towards the north of the cement floor.

#### 9.1.3 Excavation 4

Excavation 4 was measured out to include the remainder of the concrete floor as by this time a good indication was gained of the size thereof. It had sides of 9 x 6,25 m (north-south) and therefore the three excavations (1, 2 and 4) formed a rectangle of 12 x 8,25 m (north-south). It was done to further investigate the layout of the concrete floor, looking for specific answers related to different rooms (Figure 57). This of course included looking for artefacts which may give an indication of the function of rooms and to determine the foundation of the structure.

The excavation was divided into three sections by using the lines in the concrete indicating different areas and the artefacts kept separately. The divisions included a western section which concentrated on the centre of the entire structure, an eastern section which concentrated on the cement towards the east of the centre and a northern section, concentration on the floor area towards the north of the centre.

Loose soil and vegetation were removed at first and the artefacts lying on the surface was labelled as part of layer 1. Hereafter time was spent on levelling the excavation which again was easy as one only worked down to the concrete floor. As it was realised that the floor only extended approximately 8 m from the southern side of the excavation towards the north, the most northern section was tested by means of an auger. This resulted in it being clear that the thin cement layer found on the northern side of the floor in Excavation 2, did not continue here and therefore Excavation 4 was decreased with 1 m, therefore now being 11 x 6,25 m.



**Figure 57: Excavation 4 before excavation commenced.**

On completion the excavation was 14 cm deep at its deepest level (Figure 58). This was inside of the linear marks left by the divisions between different floors. The excavation consisted of 9 cm of dark and reddish brown soil, followed by the floor which was between 1 and 4 cm thick, the latter only at the edges. Below the floor it was dug for

another 4 cm. The texture of the soils was soft and sandy ending on a harder granular layer.

Features noted was different loose pieces of cement woth clear impressions left by corrugated iron thereon (Figure 59), as well as the remains of a burnt pole in situ towards the north of the structure (Figure 60). The latter was in line with the one unearthed in Excavation 2. The centre of the excavation (i.e. Excavation 4 west) reviewed a room indicated by cement with corrugated iron marks on all sides (Figure 61-73). It is clear from the marks that the corrugated iron was cemented from both sides in order to strengthen its construction. It included a doorway in its northern wall, indicated by a section where the corrugated impressions were only on the inside of the room, with the cement on the outside having a smooth edge. The central room was flanked by concrete flooring on all sides, The interpretation of the building will however be discussed below. No foundation was found.

Cultural material found consisted of glass, metal, faunal material and plastic. The glass and metal mostly originated from building material, with a few domestic artefacts (see Appendix A).



**Figure 58: The completed Excavation 4.**



**Figure 59: Impressions left by corrugated iron in a loose piece of concrete.**



**Figure 60: Remains of burnt pole from Excavation 4.**



**Figure 61:** Example of the impressions left by corrugated iron in the concrete floor.



**Figure 62:** South-eastern corner of corrugated iron room, photographed from the east.



**Figure 63:** Central section of eastern side of corrugated iron room.



**Figure 64:** North-eastern corner of corrugated iron room, photographed from the east.



**Figure 65:** North-eastern corner of corrugated iron room, photographed from the north.



**Figure 66:** Central section of northern side of corrugated iron room. Note the smooth edge, indicating a doorway/threshold.



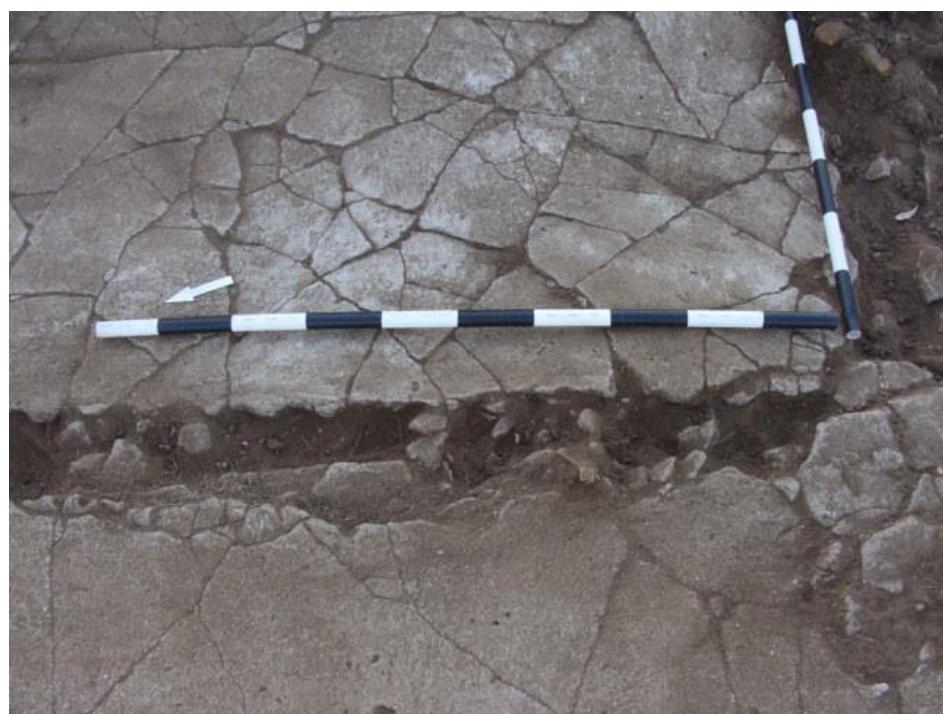
**Figure 67:** North-western corner of corrugated iron room, photographed from the north.



**Figure 68:** North-western corner of corrugated iron room, photographed from the west.



**Figure 69:** Central section of western side of corrugated iron room.



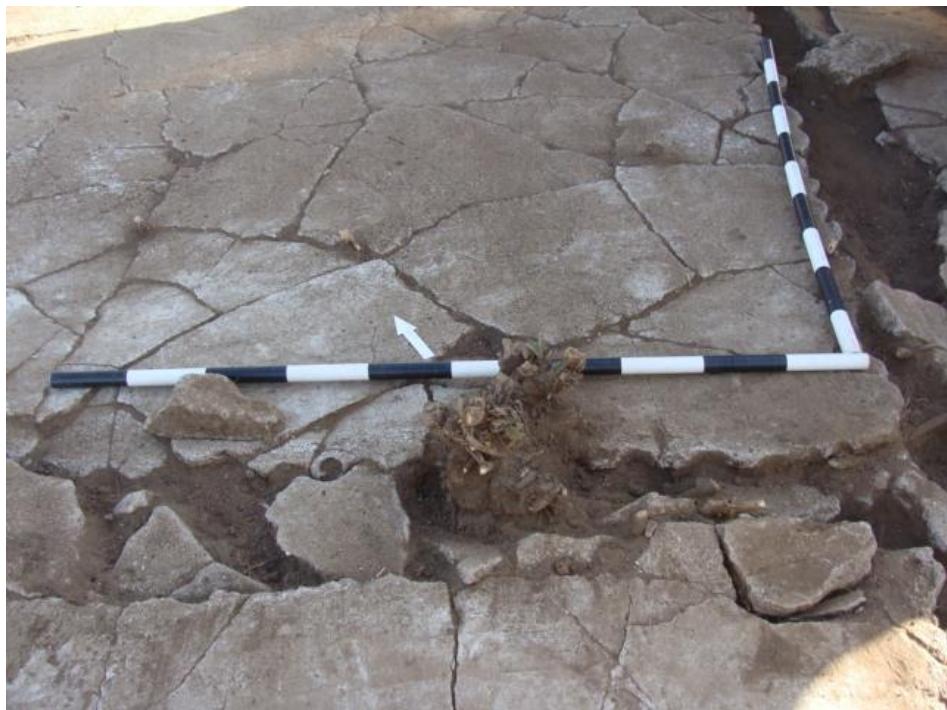
**Figure 70:** South-western corner of corrugated iron room, photographed from the west.  
Note the reed marks in the concrete opposite from the corrugated iron impressions.



**Figure 71:** South-western corner of corrugated iron room, photographed from the south.



**Figure 72:** Central section of southern side of corrugated iron room.



**Figure 73: South-eastern corner of corrugated iron room, photographed from the south.**

#### 9.2.4 Interpretation of building

After excavating the entire remains of the building, it is possible to interpret it. The remains mostly consist of an almost entirely intact concrete floor with linear marks indicating different rooms or features.

The centre of the building consists of a rectangular room (Figure 74) with sides measuring 3,15 m (north-south) x 2,95 m (east-west). This central room had a concrete floor and corrugated iron walls, with a door off-centre towards the east in the northern wall. The size of the doorway is 95 cm. Nothing indicating the material from which the door was made remained. The way in which the floor was smoothed out here indicates that the door had a plank or branch at the bottom. The door probably was cut out of the corrugated iron and a plank fixed to the bottom to make the use thereof easier. Whereas all walls were cemented from the outside as well to strengthen it, it was not the case with door as it had to be possible to open it. It seems to have opened to the inside.

The impressions left in the cement indicate that the corrugated iron sheets were placed vertically in length. Corrugated iron was patented in Great Britain in 1829 and revolutionised architecture as it was now possible to build large buildings (originally only temporary) which were self-supporting. Due to the material being portable, it was used in abundance in the colonies, such as South Africa. Sizes varied between 3 and 10 feet and 1830 (sic)<sup>12</sup> inches wide (Nicholson date?: 1-3). This would make the building approximately 3 m high. If the calculation for the width is correct, he used between 9 and 11 sheets per wall, depending on the overlap between sheets, which is

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12 This likely is 18.3 inches which converts to approximately 46 cm.

provided to keep water out and strengthen the walls. Such overlaps usually are approximately 15 cm. It therefore is suggested that Sardelli used 10 feet lengths, which he had transported to site.



**Figure 74: The central room, photographed from the north. Note the scalloped edges indicating the use of corrugated iron. The scale lies at the doorway.**

Also no indication of poles were found, suggesting that the corrugated iron walls were set inside of the wet cement floor. It is likely that the sheets used for the northern and southern walls were bent around the corners of the western and eastern walls to strengthen it. This overlap likely measured 10 cm more at each corner which is why these two walls are 20 cm shorter than the other two.

It is clear that the corrugated iron was removed with caution as the floor here does not show much deterioration. Since no indication of typical screws and washers, which are usually used to fit corrugated iron sheets together, were found, it seems that these were not used, which would have made the structure quite flimsy. Not using wood would also create a flimsy structure. It of course possible that due to the scarcity of these items, it was removed with the metal sheets. It had a window in the western wall, indicated by window glass found here. Unfortunately the fragment could not be pieced together, but a rough calculation indicate that the window was at least 20 cm wide and long. Based on the position of most of the glass it seems to have been of centre towards the south.

Outside of the western wall clear indications of reed marks were found along the entire wall, indicating that the building here had a double wall. The outer reed wall was likely constructed to keep the temperature down.

No indication of roofing were found, but as it seems the building was not built sturdy, which may suggest that it have had a roof consisting of branches or reeds. However, along the southern side there is a 15-20 cm wide section of floor which has marks indicating that it was a dropzone for water from the roof. This suggests a roof tilted towards the south in order to control the flow of rain water. It also suggest that this room likely had a solid roof, perhaps also made of corrugated iron. Sardelli thus most likely also used 10 feet lengths for the roof, which must have then been laid from east to west. The same number (between 9 and 11) sheets of 10 feet long was likely used.

The central floor was likely constructed first, but only since it was the starting point, meaning that other floors were constructed soon afterwards. It seems as if the second section of the floor that was constructed is the room towards the south as it is clear that this floor was laid over the mentioned water dropzone. This floor, which forms the central part along the southern end of the building, forms a second room.

This southern room measured 3,45 m (north-south) x 2,95 m (east-west). From marks in the cement it is clear that this room had reed walls on its eastern, southern and western sides. The reeds were fixed together with stronger leadwood poles approximately 80 cm apart. No clues were found indicating the wall on its northern side, but here it probably utilised the corrugated iron wall from the central room. Indications of a threshold in the north-western corner suggest that this was the entrance.

The floor of this southern room is smooth whereas all other floors are rough. It is believed that all floors were originally smooth, but that the reeds from the walls in this instance collapsed on top of the floor, protecting it from deteriorating. No indication of a roof or window weas found. It is believed that this roommay not have had a roof and only served as open air space where things may have been stored, warranting at least walls.

The remainder of the floor was the last to be laid. It has a U-shape running along the western and eastern sides of the two rooms and along the northern side of the central room. It was clearly laid on top of the others as the cenment overlays the last mentioned in certain areas. Before this floor was laid, the hole in the southeast was dug and laid out with stones. When constructing this floor, the cement was edged around this hole with bits falling in, explaining pieces found inside of the hole. While the cement was still wet, the poles for the basin and shelve as indicated earlier were planted around the hole.

This most likely was a stoep most likely without a roof as the structure would not have been able to carry the weight. The remains of two posts found in situ on the northern side as well as that of two poles, suggest that a row of poles was planted approximately 25 cm from the edge of the floor. This may have been a fence. No indication of such fence posts were found on other sides, but a large number of leadwood poles were identified on site, suggesting a fence or enclosure (Figure 75). It is unlikely that such a feature would only have been erected on one side as wild animals would have been a major threat on site. The poles found were lying all over the site, close to the building and may therefore represent an enclosure around it.

These wooden poles, including the remains found in situ varies between 10 and 25 cm, with the latter being outnumbered by far. The thicker ones therefore are likely corner posts with the thinner ones in between. Reeds may also have been used, but none of these survived. The length of the poles varies, but is no good indication as it may have broken. The longest of the thinner ones is 1,9 m long and of the thick ones, 2, 18 m. A few short poles, approximately 45 cm in length also was clearly cut with a 45° angle. These were likely used to fit poles together and strengthen the fence (Figure 76-79).

As indicated earlier, at the north-western corner very thin cement was unearthed. This either was the area where the cement was mixed or the extra cement after completion of the floor, was just discarded here.



**Figure 75: Leadwood poles found on site.**



**Figure 76: Thick (25 cm) pole with clear cut end.**



**Figure 77: Pole showing indication of being cut.**



**Figure 78: More cut poles, placed together to illustrate possible way of fitting it together.**



**Figure 79: Closer view of illustration of poles fitted together.**

The size of the entire floor varies, since the edge was not made straight (Figure 80-87). At most it is 9,10 m ((north-south) x 7,10 m (east-west). The front side its north towards the Sabie River and it is likely that trade route also were on this side as it is

known that these routes sometimes followed rivers (bron????). The functioning of the building is explained in the conclusion.



**Figure 80:** The excavated building remains, photographed from the north.



**Figure 81:** Northern section of building, photographed from the east.



**Figure 82:** central section of building, photographed from the east.



**Figure 83:** Southern section of building, photographed from the east.



**Figure 84:** The excavated building remains, photographed from the south.



**Figure 85:** Southern section of the building, photographed from the west.



**Figure 86:** Central section of the building, photographed from the west.



**Figure 87:** Northern section of the building, photographed from the west.

## 9.2 Middens

### 9.2.1 Excavation 3

The excavation was done approximately 40 m towards the west of the shop on an area looking as if it could be a midden. The aim was to determine the depth thereof and to obtain cultural material. It had a size of 7 x 5 m in an east-west direction (Figure 88). The aim thereof was to further investigate this midden and collect cultural material. Loose soil and vegetation were removed at first and the artefacts lying on the surface was included in layer 1 which was the only layer excavated.

Sterile soil were reached at a depth of between 2 and 4 cm (from south to north), as a result of the natural slope of the site. The texture of the soil was fine, soft and sandy and it had a reddish-brown colour (Figure 89).

A reasonably low amount of cultural material was excavated, including one ceramic shard, glass beads and glass fragments (see Appendix A). The conclusion is that the area excavated represents a deflated midden (meaning that most material have been washed away). Some artefacts were seen downslope towards the river, north-east of the excavation, confirming this. Apart from window glass, most of the other glass fragments are from household bottles (beverages and medicine), dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It therefore was deposited on site during the time the shop was operational.



**Figure 88: Excavation 3, before excavation commenced.**



**Figure 89: The completed Excavation 3.**

#### 9.2.2 Excavation 5

The excavation was measured out approximately 35 m towards the west of Excavation 3, again on a midden area. The aim therefore was to investigate the midden and unearth cultural material. Initially it was measured out with sides of 7 x 6 m in an east-west direction (Figure 90). Again loose soil and vegetation were removed at first and the artefacts lying on the surface was included in layer 1 which was the only layer excavated.

It soon became clear that certain sections in the excavation only contained surface artefacts. It was therefore decreased to an L-shape along the northern and eastern sides of the excavation. The northern leg was therefore 7 x 2 m (east-west) and the eastern one 6 x 2 (north-south). Due to time constraints it was however necessary to test smaller sections to determine the depth of the deposit. One of these, within the eastern leg, was on an area rich with faunal and cultural material (Figure 91) and measured 0,6 x 0,4 m (east-west).

On completion the excavation was between 6 and 10 cm deep, south to north. The test pit was another 5 cm deep, making the excavation 11 cm deep at its deepest level. The texture of the soil differed from a soft granular sand at the top to hard and granular lower down. The soil colour was reddish-brown (Figure 92-93).

Excavation 5 unearthed the most cultural material of any of the excavations, but many of these were faunal material which were fragmented to a large extent. Other artefacts excavated include ceramics, glass beads, metal and charcoal (see Appendix A). The ceramics consist of indigenous pottery similar to what was excavated at the nearby Gaza Gray site, confirming that the Sardelli site was utilised during the same time

period. It is concluded that the area excavated indeed is a refuse midden, but it may have been deflated to some extent.



**Figure 90: Excavation 5 before excavation commenced.**



**Figure 91: Some of the faunal remains in situ.**



**Figure 92:** Test pit in Excavation 5.



**Figure 93:** The completed Excavation 5. Note the L-shape north and south and the test pit in the eastern leg.

## 10. Discussion and Conclusion

To fully understand the meaning of the site, one needs to make reference to the nearby Gaza Gray site at it seems the soldiers from Steinaecker's Horse who were present there used the shop of Sardelli, perhaps not only to intern Bill Sanderson, but likely for other functions as well.

Just as was the case at the Gaza Gray site, there were indigenous people present at the Sardelli's shop site. These people were most likely Tsonga and probably inhabited the area since the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Sardelli probably erected his shop here due to it being close to the trade route which likely served as route for mine workers between Mocambique and the central Transavaal. Having a work force at hand may have also contributed to the location. During the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) the indigenous people were still present and were used by the soldiers of the Steinaecker's Horse unit as workers for different tasks. The soldiers concentrated on the southern section of the Gaza Gray site, but historical information does indicate that they used the shop. Sardelli likely also made use of local people as servants.

This may have been brief, but the excavation of the shop and surrounding site nevertheless assist in obtaining a better understanding of this site and Steinaecker's Horse. This contributes to a more comprehensive history of the unit. The discussion and conclusions with regards to the site of Sardelli's shop also needs to be placed in context with other sites occupied by Steinaecker's Horse, which is done in this discussion.

Apart from the above, another important reason for archaeological research here was that the site is being eroded by the rain. The relative low quantities of artefacts, especially on the shop area proves that the archaeological material is washed away due to its close proximity to both the Sabie River as the tributary thereof, about 4 m from the shop. Due to the rain the middens on site seem to be deflated, meaning that much of the topsoil and ash have been washed away (together with some artefacts) leaving the heavier objects in situ. This is indicated by the scatters of cultural material on the site which clearly are not middens but only loose objects lying around. Apart from other research goals, the excavations at least salvaged some of these artefacts.

After the excavation seasons, the excavations were covered with the soil coming from each one respectively as is standard practice in archaeology. The excavations on the middens may be opened up again in future as these may not have revealed all that is to know on the areas where they were dug. Nothing much else will probably be learned from opening the excavations at the shop again.

Apart from the artefacts excavated, a surface sample was also collected in order to obtain a more representative sample. The dateable European artefacts found, represent the period of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> to the Early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Anglo-Boer War was fought between 1899 and 1902. Therefore the site provides evidence that it was occupied during this period. The European glass sherds excavated also are similar to those excavated at other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse, but these were common goods for that time period and therefore do not necessarily indicate the presence of this unit here. Historical information in this regard is however ample proof thereof (see section 8).

It would however be an added bonus to have found specific military artefacts such as ammunition and uniform buttons which would serve as archaeological proof of the

presence of a military unit here. This was unfortunately not found. The only artefacts which may have a military origin is a buckle from the bit or bridle of a horse, mule or donkey. It may however also have belonged to Sardelli or someone else visiting the site, even before the war.

It has to be mentioned that only a few military objects were found at the Gaza Gray site, indicating that the site was not a major outpost of the unit. The shop probably only served as extension of the Gaza Gray site, and was perhaps only used during the war when Sanderson was held captive there. Therefore finding military objects would indeed be rare.

It is known that Gaza Gray already used the main site before the war and having the same group of people present here seems logic that the shop would have been utilised. No stratigraphy could be detected in any of the excavations, meaning that artefacts from all the mentioned activities are probably mixed on the site and that the period of occupation of the site may not have been very long.

The indigenous pottery found at the site most probably are Nguni in origin and could date to the between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century (see Appendix A). Other indications of the presence of these people found on site include hammer stones (Figure 94) and lower grinding stones (Figure 95).



**Figure 94: Example of a hammer stone found on site.**



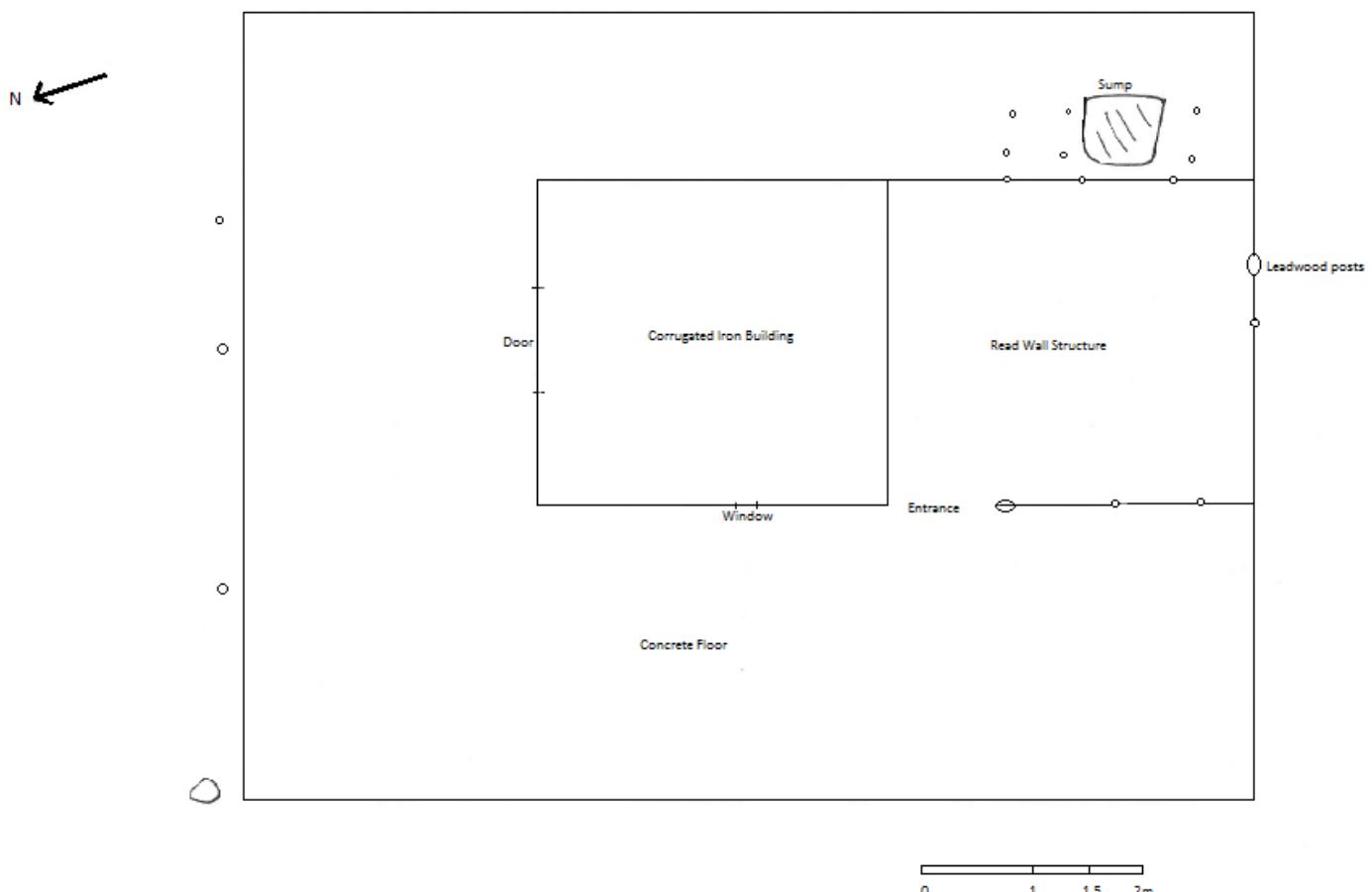
**Figure 95: Example of a lower grinding stone for maize grinding, found on site.**

Apart from the indigenous people and members of Steinaecker's Horse on the site, members of other military units who associated with them, such as the Black Watch and Native Police, were probably also present. Wolhuter (2010: 62, 85) indicated that the Native Police were stationed at Steinaecker's Horse pickets. 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), probably due to their excellent knowledge of the area.

Metal artefacts were the most common found at the site of Sardelli's shop (see Appendix A). These mostly were pieces of wire of which many have been fixed to wooden poles around the original building or a fence around it. It also includes other building material such as nails, which also may have been part of wooden boxes in which things were stored.

Apart from faunal material which are very brittle and therefore likely calculated in higher volumes than other artefacts, building material were by far dominant. Apart from metal this included mostly window glass dating to the 1890's as well as fence posts, made from lead wood. The artefactual evidence indicates the presence of a well-built structure, which is corroborated by finding a concrete floor. Historical information indicates that this is one of the shops of Sardelli and his partner Charlie Woodlands. The structure has been explained above (section 9). A summary is provided together with a possible reconstruction thereof (Figure 96-100).

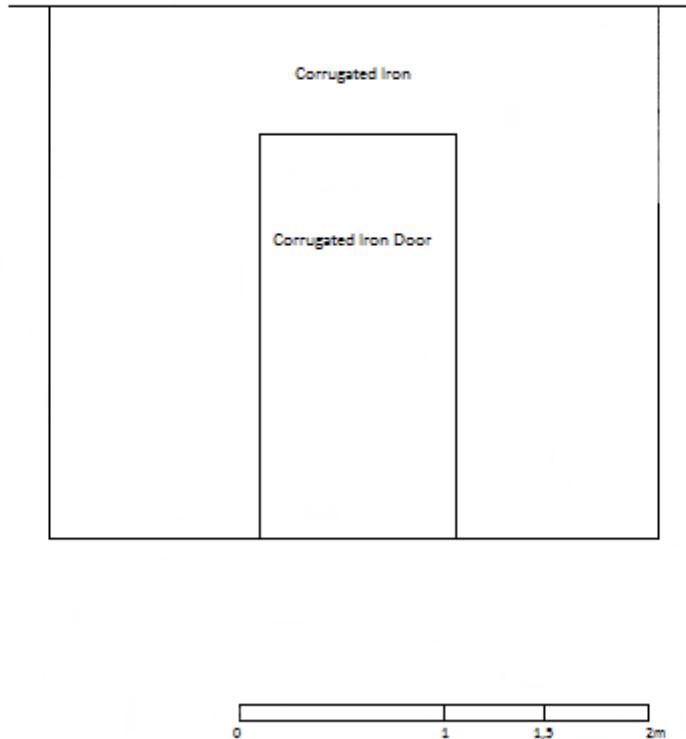
STEINAECER'S HORSE BILL SANDERSON SARDELLI'S SHOP GROUNDPLAN



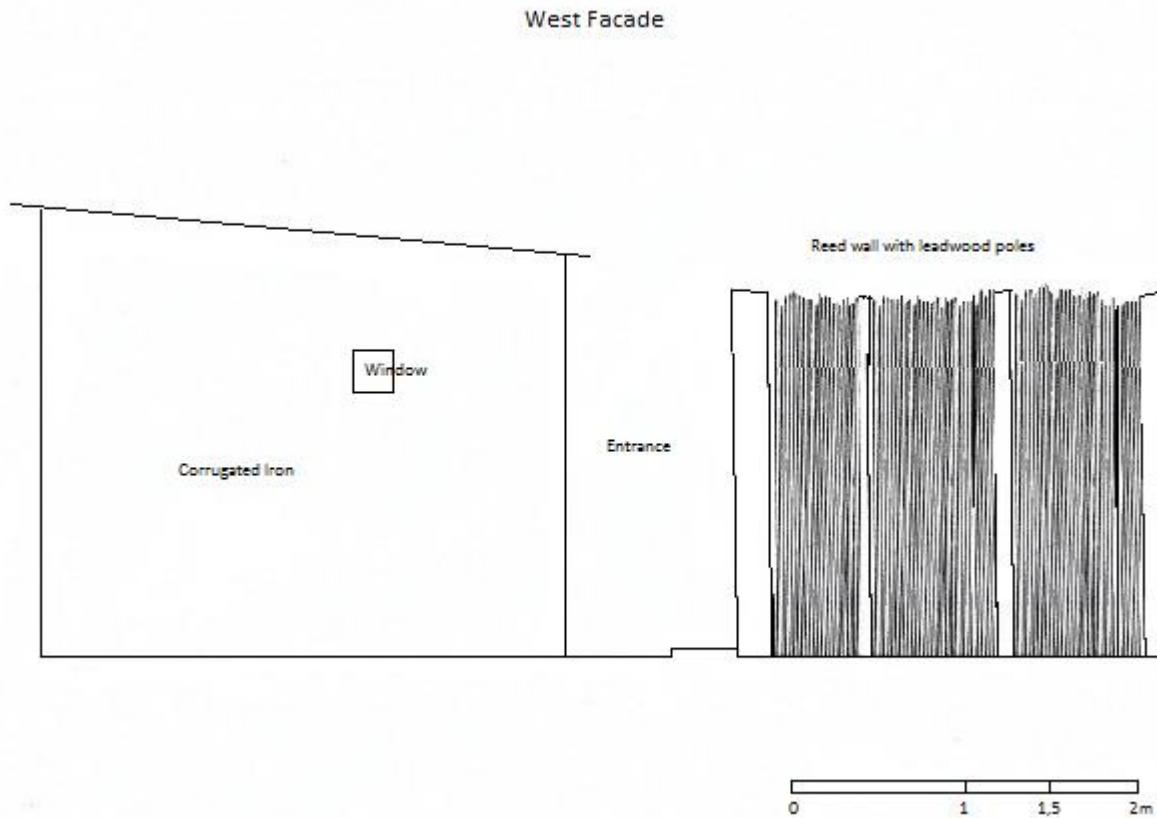
**Figure 96: Ground plan of Sardelli's shop at Sabiepoort (the place where Bull Sanderson was interned).**

The building consisted of a central room with corrugated iron walling and likely also a corrugated iron roof. It had a door cut into the corrugate sheets on the northern side, suggesting that this is sthe front. It had a window on the western side. The western wall was also covered with reeds.

NORTH FACADE

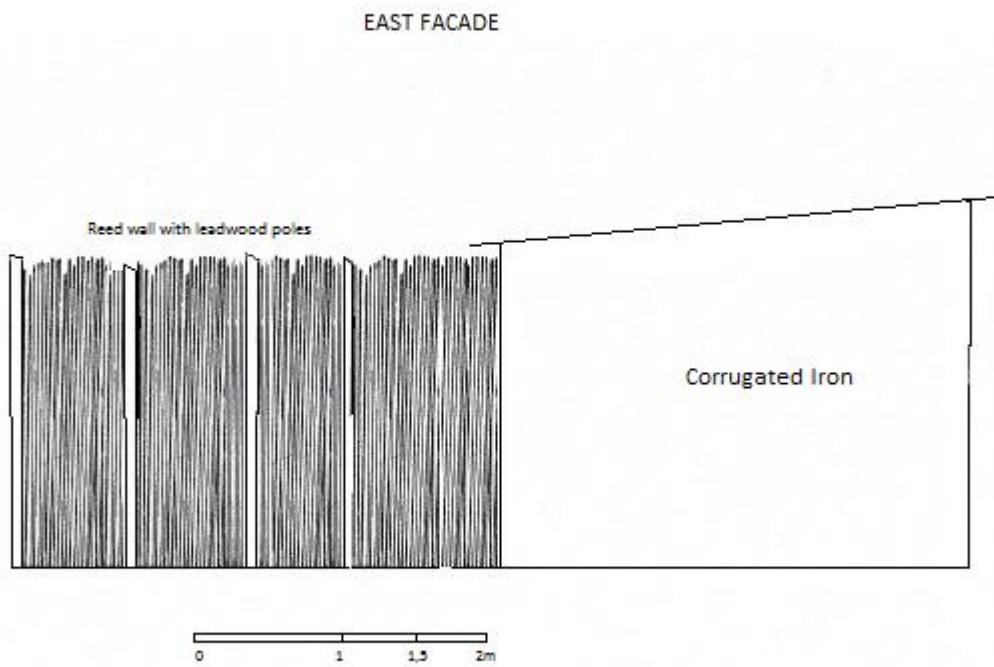


**Figure 97:** North façade of the shop.



**Figure 98: West façade of the shop.**

On the southern side a second 'room' was connected to the corrugated one. It likely did not have a roof and had three walls made from leadwood poles with reeds in between. The fourth was where it was connected to corrugated iron building. It had an entrance in the northwestern corner. Pitch may have been used as waterproofing.



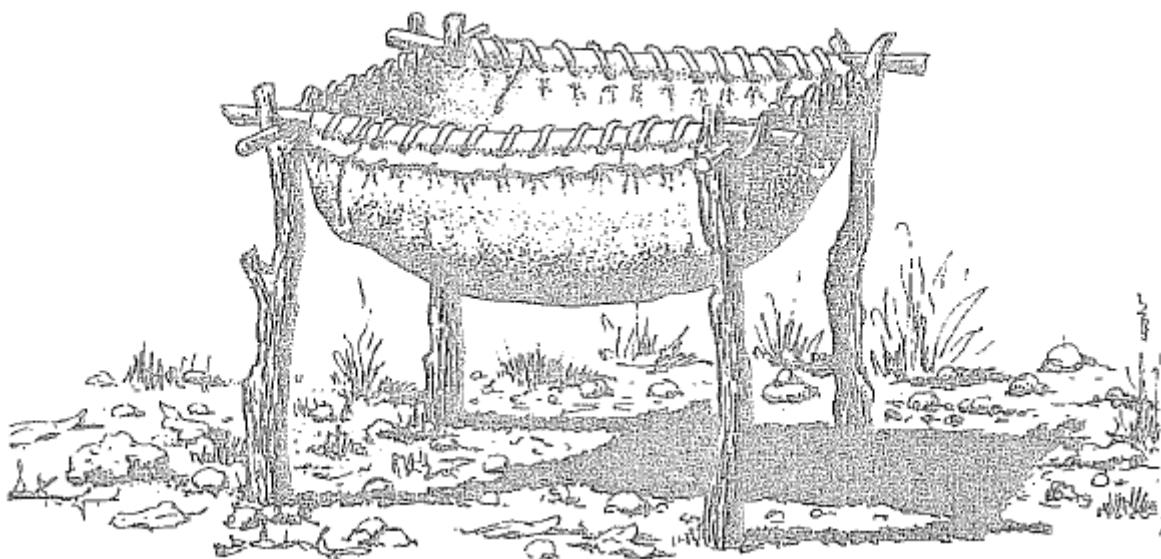
**Figure 99: East façade of the shop.**

**Figure 100: South façade of the shop.**

From the cement floor of these rooms the cement was extended on three sides, (east, north and west) to form a stoep. This likely did not have a roof. Remains of poles found indicated a lapa or fence at least on the northern side.

On the eastern side of the reed structure, a sump and six post holes were found in the cement. This likely was a washing area as the sump was reasonably deep meaning it had to drain large quantities of water. It is suggested that a skin was used to form a basinlike feature (Figure 101), or that a bucket was used where people could shower. However the rocks in the sump was not worked of or laid to create a smooth surface and therefore the basin idea seems more plausible.

Other theories include it being a cooking area or place where the alcohol was brewed. However no indications of charcoal was found, indicating that fire was not used here. An unlikely suggestion is that it may have been a slaughtering place, but the closeness thereof to the building would have created immense health risks.



**Figure 101: It is suggested that the basin looked something like this.**

The lack of material indicating function for the different sections of the building indicates that loose items were utilized, which had either washed away or was removed when the site was abandoned. This is corroborated by the fact that very little other types of artefacts were excavated. Only a few metal pot lids gave an indication of activities at the site, namely cooking, or perhaps even the selling of cooking pots. These were all found outside of the rooms of the building and therefore indicated cooking outside and perhaps eating on the verandah.

No ceramic or glass artefacts were excavated at the shop. Glass fragments found at one of the middens are however contemporary with the occupation of the shop during the 1890's and early 1900's. These are from bottles which contained either alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages, similar to what have been excavated on other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse.

Not finding large amounts of other artefacts seem to indicate that the site was abandoned at some time and that furniture and provisions sold there were moved. The few indications of what may have been sold here, indicates that the customers likely did not use or consume many of that on site. The washing away of artefacts after the abandonment of the site, also may have influenced the richness of the archaeological deposit.

Thus, there are but a few clues to the function of the two rooms. It is believed that the main room was the shop and that it may also have served as sleeping quarters from time to time. Expensive goods may also have been kept here under lock. The reed structure was likely a storage area, perhaps mainly the area where the alcohol was kept and even sold from. The stoep or verandah served as washing area on the southeastern corner with the remainder only creating a relatively neat area around the building.

A food tin and bottle cap found may be from items sold or used at the site. The few remains of glass bottles found suggests that Sardelli did not dell his home brewn

alcoholic beverage in such containers, but perhaps in indigenous type ceramic containers. However, not much of these were found either, but it could indicate the transfer of the items to another place.

Sections of a fishing rod indicate the activity of fishing and supplementing the diet with fish, but it is possible that this comes from a later period in time. It is known that other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse were re-used at a later stage, and it seems to have been the same here. This may have been by a game warden who knew of the existence of the site. The faunal material excavated probably indicate the utilisation of animals, both wild and domesticated as a source of food. This indeed was the case on other Steinaecker's Horse sites, such as the northernmost outpost, close to Letaba (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003b: 47). Maize was also eaten on site, at least by the indigenous people as shown by the grinding stones on site. These are maize grinders, which differs from those used for sorghum (Huffman 2007: 454). Maize only came to Africa reasonably late (approximately AD 1550) during the Late Iron Age (Huffman 2007: 41) and together with the ceramic sequence indicate that the site was probably only inhabited after 1840.

The absence of the remains of tins from tinned rations and glass from different bottles clearly indicate that the site may not have had a long occupation by the British. Apart from these rations, their diet was supplemented by eating the meat of domesticated and non-domesticated animals. It is known that the members of Steinaecker's Horse herded the livestock 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. As indicated they also confiscated cattle of the Boers, for instance the herd of Abel Erasmus (Wolhuter 2010: 68-70). At the Letaba site it was clear that the black people were more inclined to supplementing their diet with fresh meat than the white soldiers. Too little faunal material was however found at the shop site to make the same deduction. Remains of muscle and land snail shells as well as ostrich eggs beads also indicates that this may have formed part of the diet.

European type metal and glass artefacts found at the two middens implies that these are contemporary with the shop. It may however have been owned by local people. It is doubtful that such expensive objects (e.g. a pocket watch) would have been sold here, but it represents personal items belonging to someone present on site.

From the cultural objects excavated at the Sardelli site a few activities the people on site were involved in, can be deduced. Brewing the alcohol, hunting and fishing has been suggested. They also may have assisted with the herding of cattle and other livestock and may have planted maize. They also could have traded in any of these. Glass beads found on site certainly indicate that they were engaged in trading activities, although it may have been worn for personal adornment. The Tsonga were well known as middlemen on the early trade routes (Changuion 1999: 104; Ferreira 2002: 34). Maps in Bergh (1999: 9) and Pienaar (2007) do indicate that one of the early trade routes and an old wagon route passed through Sabiepoort and likely is the reason why Sardelli erected his shop here.

Many of the tasks indicated above may not have been performed by the soldiers. They of course would have kept watch and went on routine patrols. During the internment of Sanderson they would have been busy guarding and interrogating him.

In conclusion, it can be deducted that the site was occupied before the Anglo-Boer War, during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Tsonga speaking people. During the 1890's Dimitri Sardelli and his associates erected a shop here. The lack of artefacts may indicate that they never stayed here, or at least not in the building. They may have stayed in a tent or wagon, or may have travelled to site when necessary, since one of his other shops is only about 10 km from here. During the Anglo-Boer War, Sardelli joined the Steinaecker's Horse unit and thus abandoned his shop. Steinaecker's Horse however used it, but there are no artefactual evidence indicating that this was done for any other purpose than imprisoning Bill Sanderson.

No artefact with a specific military origin was found and typical European objects were also very scarce. It is perhaps possible that such artefacts were washed away as the site is at the confluence of two rivers, but it is more likely that the European influence on site, especially the military presence, were short lived. Although the European artefacts identified are similar to what was found on other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse and other Anglo-Boer War sites, it needs to be stated that these are typical European type artefacts, dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and may have been present on site even without the military connection. It therefore does not provide proof of a military presence here, but indeed of the utilization of the site by Europeans during this time. Therefore it is only the historical accounts which states that the site was not only a shop, but was also used by Steinaecker's Horse.

## 11. Recommendations

1. The Sardelli's shop site at Sabiepoort, also called the site where Bill Sanderson was interned, is well situated for the purpose of tourism. An existing ranger's road runs approximately 500 m from the site and therefore it is easily accessible (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. It is not necessary to open the site for all visitors to the park, but perhaps only to those on guided tours. *In the event of such plans being investigated, a proper management plan should be written. Archaetnos could assist in this regard.*
2. A display of the site can be installed at the nearest rest camp, being Lower Sabie or on site or even at the nearby Gaza Gray site, as the two sites probably functioned as one. As members of the Steinaecker's Horse unit, including Gaza Gray, 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. *Archaetnos can also assist with the development of such a display.*
3. Because of the location of the site, close to the Sabie River, flooding poses a great danger to the material remains. 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. Archaeologically speaking the site has been researched almost to its full potential. *The Kruger National Park did the right thing in having the site researched, in order to document the information. The information should however be made*

*available to the public in some or other form.*

4. Although the historical information on the site and Steinaecker's Horse unit now is more than what was gathered during the excavations at other sites, 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 excavated objects are curated by the Ditsong National Museum of Culture in Pretoria, with all other material excavated at the sites. This is in accordance with the excavation permit issued by SAHRA as this institutions has the capacity to properly curate this. The spirit of the law however is that excavated material should be returned to its place of origin. *Cultural material can therefore be used for display purposes and in such a way be brought back to the Park, as was done by the display on the Northernmost outpost at Makhadzi. Archaetnos can assist in this regard, should it be the Parks wish.*
7. The map drawn by Major J. Stevenson-Hamilton and dated 13.10.1903, was studied and compared with other historical information in order to try to locate the other sites where Steinaecker's Horse had outposts. *This was followed up by a field survey in order to physically locate and assess these sites with regard to research potential and degradation. However some of these sites could not be identified physically. The search for those not found, should continue. 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.*
8. The sites at Gomondwane (Sardelli's shop), Bottelkop and Salitje was visited during 2014 and photographs taken. Too few cultural remains were identified on these sites to be able to excavate them in future.
9. The large number of artifacts excavated during 2005 at the Sabi Bridge post made the transport and storage thereof difficult. This was 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 material 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 between 2006 and 2016 it was not necessary to implement this policy, but this will be used on all other Steinaecker's Horse sites in future, if necessary.*
10. The site, together with other historical and archaeological sites in the Park, should be managed in accordance with the principles of cultural heritage resources management. These principles are based on heritage legislation, mostly the National Heritage Resources Act (25 of 1999).

- 11.** The most important aspect relating to the preservation and conservation of sites such as these are to compile heritage management plans (Van Vollenhoven 2000: 95-113). These should conform to requirements and basic principles which are the convention in cultural conservation circles. An outline of the latter is given by Van Vollenhoven (1998: 25-49, 54-55).

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## APPENDIX A

# A REPORT ON THE ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL MATERIAL RECOVERED FROM THE 2016 EXCAVATIONS AT THE SARDELLI'S SHOP SITE, ALSO KNOWN AS THE SITE WHERE BILL SANDERSON WAS INTERRED BY STEINAECKER'S HORSE

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### INTRODUCTION

This report discusses the analyses of the cultural material recovered during the August 2016 excavations at the Sardelli's shop site, also known as the site where Bill Sanderson was interred by Steinaecker's Horse. Five excavations were conducted while a few artefacts were also collected from the surface of the site. The entire remains of the shop was excavated (Excavation 1, 2 and 4) as well as two areas looking like middens (Excavations 3 and 5). The material from the surface sampling and of each excavation will be discussed separately, while an interpretation of the finds will be given at the end.

It should be mentioned that the material is very similar in terms of type and age than those found during previous excavation seasons at the nearby Gaza Gray site of Steinaecker's Horse. Most of the cultural artefacts (this excludes the ecofacts consisting of faunal material) are of European origin and came from the remains of the shop. Artefacts with a local origin were mostly found on the two middens.

Artefacts of European origin belong to the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and therefore fall in the period of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) when the Steinaecker's Horse unit was operational in the area today known as the Kruger National Park. A few objects found may date from a slightly younger period (ca. 1900-1920). Ceramics that were found on this section of the site are mainly similar to those found on the nearby Gaza Gray site previously, dating broadly to 1850-1900 A.D..

Detail on the history of Steinaecker's Horse and their role in the War and the Park is discussed in various reports and articles completed over the years since 1997. It will therefore not be repeated here.

Faunal material found were mostly extremely brittle and may even have originated recently (after the site was abandoned). It therefore is not analyzed, but is included in this report.

It needs to be indicated that Sardelli's shop is located approximately 2,5 km north-west of the main section of the Gaza Gray site. The site was likely also under the command of Captain Gaza Gray (see main report). Dimitri Sardelli became a member of Steinaecker's Horse (Woolmore 2006: 65, 103). Apart from the remains of the shop, which consisted of a concrete floor of approximately 9 x 7,5 m (N-S), cultural material was also identified in an area of approximately 220 m around the shop, especially towards the south and west, since the Sabie River and a small tributary thereof are located respectively towards the north and east of the site. At least two middens containing cultural material were identified.

The indigenous material found points to the site being occupied by indigenous people and not the soldiers of Steinaecker's Horse, but it is known that the soldiers did use the shop. It of course is possible that Sardelli had a shop here because of the local people residing here or, on the other hand, they may have decided to stay here because of his shop. It is known that Steinaecker's Horse frequently made their camps close to groups of local people. They associated with these people and most likely chose the site since these people could be utilised by them. There however is no historical evidence that Steinaecker's Horse occupied this site apart from using the shop for the internment of Bill Sanderson. Their association with the site therefore seems very brief.

Five excavations were done here in 2016. These are:

- Excavation 1 – on the south-eastern section of the shop
- Excavation 2 – on the western section of the shop
- Excavation 3 – possible midden towards the west of the shop
- Excavation 4 – on the north-eastern section of the shop
- Excavation 5 – possible midden further towards the west of the shop

The cultural material recovered during the 2016 excavations included the following categories:

**Ceramics: non-European (local) – 127**

**Glass – 252 (of which 14 represent glass beads)**

**Metal – 435**

**Stone – 4**

**Wood - 3**

**Faunal remains – 1028 (including 3 Ostrich Egg Shell beads, 1 Ostrich Egg Shell disc and 1 mother-of-pearl bead)**

**Charcoal – 17**

**Miscellaneous - 2**

**Total number of artefacts: 1868**

### **SURFACE COLLECTION**

The surface collection consist of the following 150 artefacts:

Glass – 27 (including 8 glass beads)

Metal – 111

Stone – 4

Charcoal - 8

#### *Glass*

19 x fragments of clear window glass found reasonably close to the shop (Figure 1). The first window glass manufactured in Britain, was in Roman times and was called broadsheet glass. It was of very poor quality and at best translucent and due to the small size of the sheets was made into leaded lights. The production of broadsheet glass declined and by the early 14th century and now crown glass was being imported from France, though it was not manufactured in Britain until the late 17th century.

Earlier in the 17th century blown plate was manufactured by very laboriously grinding broadsheet glass, which by now could be produced in larger pieces. This was very expensive and so not used much for windows in buildings but mainly for mirrors and carriages. Crown glass was made by blowing a sphere of molten glass, opening the end opposite the blowpipe while still molten and spinning it out into a circular sheet. While it still contained air bubbles and concentric ripples, the quality of this glass was much better than that of broadsheet, though the size of panes cut from it was still quite limited, so windows were all many-paned. The central pane cut from these "bullions" contained the bulls-eye, the thickened area where the glass was attached to the "punty", the rod used to spin it.

In the late 18th century the manufacture of polished plate glass was introduced into Britain. The process consisted of casting a sheet of glass onto a table and then grinding and polishing it by hand, superseded at the beginning of the 19th century by steam powered machine-grinding and polishing. Large panes of very good quality glass could be produced, but it was a very expensive process, so this was generally only used for the windows of the best rooms in larger houses.

In 1834 an improved cylinder sheet process was introduced from Germany. This was similar to the process for making broadsheet glass, but technological advances meant that much larger sheets of good quality glass could be produced. The withdrawal of duty on glass in 1845 led to a great increase in demand as the price dropped by 75% and this method became the main means of manufacturing window glass until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A little later, rolled plate obscure glass with a ribbed pattern was manufactured, but by 1888 had been largely replaced by machine rolled obscure glass with a variety of patterns and ten years later wired cast glass was invented by Pilkingtons (<http://www.sashwindowslondon.org.uk/info/history-of-glass-manufacture.html> accessed on 17/11/2016).

The window glass is 2,5 mm thick, as was the case with all glass excavated here. The thickness of window glass made from the latter method, can be used as a relative dating technique. Basically the thickness of the glass grew bigger during the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century whereafter the thickness became standardised to between 3 and 3,3 mm. A study of window glass in the USA, indicated that glass of this thickness are likely to date between 1850 and 1920, or even 1870 to 1900 (Weiland 2009: 29-31). Of course, such a small sample from only one site, never provides a good comparison, but it since the dates do overlap with the known dates for the site (1890's to at least 1901), it does make sense. It therefore proves that the shop had a window on its western side (see main report).



**Figure 1: Window glass from the surface collection.**

8 x glass bead found close to Excavation 3. This include 4 small blue, 1, medium blue, 1 large blue, 1 extremely small blue (<2mm) and 1 small pink bead (Figure 2). These types of beads have been found on all the other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse and have been identified as trade beads (also typical of the Late Iron Age) originating from Europe and India. The smaller beads are all of Indian or Venetian origin and are called

trade beads as these were commonly used in trade during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of course it was also worn as decoration (Faria 2013: 19-20). Since the site was known to be a shop, it does make sense to find it here.



**Figure 2: Glass beads from the surface collection.**

#### *Metal*

1 x part of food tin (Figure 3)

67 x nails (Figure 3). Three of these were bent to form hooks and one had two sharpened points.

40 x pieces of wire mostly found close to the shop. Most of these were used to fit wooden fence poles together.

1 x wire hook (Figure 4)

1 x metal rod with sharpened point (Figure 5)

1 x buckle (Figure 6). The buckle most likely comes from the bit or bridle of a horse, mule or donkey (Personal communication: J. le Roux).



**Figure 3:** Metal artefacts from the surface collection.



**Figure 4:** Wire hook.



**Figure 5: Metal peg with sharpened point.**



**Figure 6: Metal buckle from the bit or bridle of a horse, mule or donkey.**

*Stone*

4 x stone tools Middle and Late Stone Age (Figure 7)

*Charcoal*

8 x charcoaled wood pieces which may have formed part of fence around shop (Figure 8)



**Figure 7: Stone tools from the surface collection.**



**Figure 8: Charcoaled wood, most likely remains of a wooden fence post.**

## **EXCAVATION 1**

At Excavation 1, the following 67 artefacts were unearthed:

Glass – 1

Metal - 65

Wood - 1

The excavation was done on the south-eastern corner of the shop. The focus was on unearthing the remains of the shop and to collect cultural material which could be used to shed light on possible activity areas.

#### *Glass*

1 x fragment of clear window glass found inside of a cavity in the floor of the shop (see discussion on window glass above)

#### *Metal*

1 x section of a nail (Figure 9)

1 x small wood screw (Figure 9)

63 x pieces of wire also mostly used to fit wooden fence poles together (Figure 10). Thirty-four of these were found in the mentioned cavity.



**Figure 9: Nail and wood screw from Excavation 1.**



**Figure 10: Wire from Excavation 1. Note those used to fit poles together.**

*Wood*

1 x section of a fishing rod (Figure 11). Fishing rods were either manufactured from wood or bamboo during the late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century ([www.newworldencyclopedia.org](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org) accessed on 15/09/2016).



**Figure 11: Section of a fishing rod from Excavation 1.**

**EXCAVATION 2**

At Excavation 2, only 41 artefacts were unearthed:

Metal – 38

Wood – 2

Miscellaneous - 1

The excavation was done on the western end of the shop. Its aim was to find the western corners of the structure as well as cultural artefacts.

*Metal*

33 x pieces of wire. Again many of these seem to be those used to fit poles together (Figure 12).

3 x nails (Figure 12)

1 x metal hook (Figure 12)

1 x bottle cap (Figure 12). This object most likely is not contemporary with the occupation thereof by Sardelli.



**Figure 12: Metal artefacts from Excavation 2.**

*Wood*

1 x section of possible pole used in the building or in a fence around it (Figure 13)

1 x section of a fishing rod (Figure 14). Fishing rods were either manufactured from wood or bamboo during the late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century ([www.newworldencyclopedia.org](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org) accessed on 15/09/2016). This section has the same white and blue colour as the one excavated in Excavation 1 and therefore it most likely belongs to the same rod.



**Figure 13: Section of wooden pole from Excavation 2.**

#### *Miscellaneous*

1 x plastic piece (bakelite) of fishing rod (Figure 14). It was found together with the wooden section mentioned above. Plastic was created by Alexander Parkes in 1862 ([www.inventors.about.com](http://www.inventors.about.com) accessed on 15/09/2016). The first bakelite, a type of plastic commonly used today, was manufactured in 1907 ([www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com) accessed on 15/09/2016). It therefore seems as if the fishing rod postdates the occupation of the site by Sardelli.



**Figure 14: Two parts of a fishing rod from Excavation 2. The blue and white colour is consisted with that of the section found in Excavation 1.**

## **EXCAVATION 4**

This excavation is discussed together with Excavations 1 and 2 since it was done on the same feature, namely the remains of the shop. At Excavation 4, a number of 355 artefacts were unearthed.

By this time it was realized that the shop may have had different rooms and therefore the excavation was divided into three sections and the artefacts kept separately. This was done in order to look if certain artefacts could perhaps indicate the function of different areas/rooms.

The divisions is as follows:

4 West – 89 artefacts

4 East – 78 artefacts

4 North – 188 artefacts

Glass – 95 (84 west; 4 east; 7 north)

Metal – 217 (3 west; 34 east; 180 north)

Faunal material – 42 (2 west; 40 east)

Miscellaneous – 1 (1 north)

### *Glass*

95 x clear window glass (84 west; 4 east; 7 north) (Figure 15) (see discussion on window glass above)



**Figure 15: Clear window glass from Excavation 4 West.**

*Metal*

West:

2 x hairpin shaped nails (Figure 16)

1 x small wood screw (Figure 16)

East:

28 x pieces of wire again mostly used for fitting poles together (Figure 17).

1 x nail (Figure 17)

3 x hairpin shaped nails (Figure 17)

2 x metal pot handles (Figure 18) likely from an enamel cooking pot

North:

179 x pieces of wire, again mostly used for fitting poles together

1 x metal pot handle (Figure 19) likely from an enamel cooking pot



**Figure 16: Hairpin shaped nails and small wood screw from Excavation 4 West.**



**Figure 17:** Hairpin shaped nails, another nail and wire from Excavation 4 East.



**Figure 18:** Possible pot handles from Excavation 4 East.



**Figure 19: Possible pot handle from Excavation 4 North.**

*Miscellaneous*

1 x plastic button - north (Figure 20)



**Figure 20: Plastic button from Excavation 4 north.**

*Faunal remains*

3 x tail bones of a small mammal (2 – west; 1 - east) (Figure 21)

1 x small shell – east (Figure 22)

38 x pieces of Achatina (land snail) shell – east (Figure 22)



**Figure 21: Tail bones from Excavation 4 West.**



**Figure 22: Shell from Excavation 4 East.**

### **EXCAVATION 3**

Excavation 3 produced 128 artefacts:

Ceramics – 1

Glass – 127 (including 4 glass beads)

The excavation was done to the west of the shop on an area looking as if it could be a midden. The aim was to determine the depth thereof and to obtain cultural material. It seems to be a deflated midden (meaning that most material have been washed away). A reasonable number of artefacts were seen downslope and towards the north-east of the excavation, confirming this.

#### *Ceramics*

1 x undecorated shard with red burnish (Figure 23)



**Figure 23: Undecorated pottery with red burnish from Excavation 3.**

#### *Glass*

43 x clear glass of which 2 fragments are window glass (see discussion on window glass above). The other likely are from soda/ mineral water bottles or medicine containers dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lastovica & Lastovica 1990: 27, 43-46).

56 x dark/ olive green coloured glass fragments, typical late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century liquor bottle glass (Lastovica & Lastovica 1990: 33-41) (Figure 24)

24 x fragments of light green glass with embossed pattern. These all are from a Rose's lime juice bottle, dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lastovica & Lastovica 1990: 63, 67) (Figure 25).

2 x small blue beads (Figure 26). These types of beads have been found on all the other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse and have been identified as trade beads (also typical of the Late Iron Age) originating from Europe and India. The smaller beads are all of Indian or Venetian origin and are called trade beads as these were commonly used in trade

during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of course it was also worn as decoration (Faria 2013: 19-20).

Since the site was known to be a shop, it does make sense to find it here.

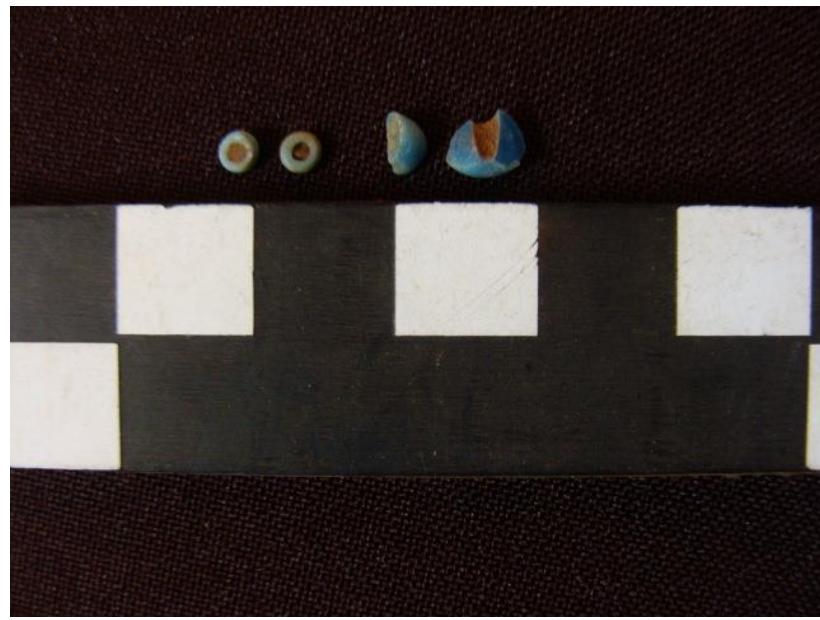
2 x broken medium sized beads (Figure 26)



**Figure 24:** Fragments from liquor bottles from unearthed in Excavation 3.



**Figure 25:** Glass from a Rose's lime juice bottle.



**Figure 26: Glass beads from Excavation 3.**

## **EXCAVATION 5**

At Excavation 5 a number of 1127 artefacts and was therefore the excavation which was the most rich in cultural material.

Ceramics – 126

Glass beads – 2

Metal - 4

Faunal material – 986

Charcoal - 9

The excavation was done towards the south-west of Excavation 3 on another area looking as if it could be a midden. This indeed proofed to be the case, but even this midden might have been deflated to some extent.

### *Ceramics*

119 x undecorated shards

1 x undecorated rim shard (Figure 27)

2 x decorated rim shards (Figure 27)

4 x decorated shards without rim (Figure 28). The pottery is similar to ceramics found on the nearby Gaza Gray site. Analysis of the pottery from the Gaza Gray site (found during both the 2010 and 2011 excavations) by Wim Biemond indicate that the pottery has an Nguni/Tsonga origin and possibly date to the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Biemond 2011: 2; 5-6, 9; Personal communication: W. Biemond). This is of course indication that the site was also occupied prior to the Anglo-Boer War and Steinaecker's Horse presence, but the

possibility that the site was still settled during the War should not be excluded. At least one of the shards is similar to that of the Klingbeil facies of the Benfica sub-branch of the Kalundu tradition. If so it would date to AD 1000-1200 (Huffman 2007: 297-300). This would mean that it belongs to a group who were present on the site long before Sardelli or Steinaecker's Horse were there. However the remains of both upper and lower maize grinding stones were identified on site. As maize was only introduced to southern Africa after 1550 A.D. (Huffman 2007: 41), the pottery cannot be Klingbeil. Together with the Tsonga pottery it perhaps is a copy of earlier styles.



**Figure 27: Rim shards from Excavation 5, the latter two with decoration.**

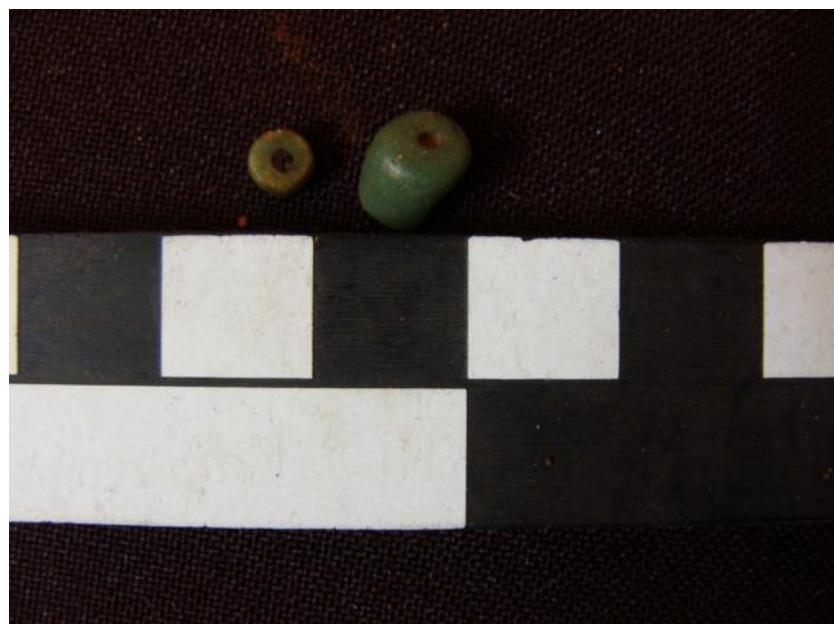


**Figure 28: Decorated shards without rim from Excavation 5.**

### *Glass Beads*

1 x small blue bead (Figure 29)

1 x medium blue bead (Figure 29). These types of beads have been found on all the other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse and have been identified as trade beads (also typical of the Late Iron Age) originating from Europe and India. The smaller beads are all of Indian or Venetian origin and are called trade beads as these were commonly used in trade during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of course it was also worn as decoration (Faria 2013: 19-20). Since the site was known to be a shop, it does make sense to find it here. Similar beads to these were found previously at other Steinaecker's Horse sites. This most likely is a trade bead from Europe and could be an indication of trade on the site (Van Vollenhoven 2013: 141).



**Figure 29: Glass beads from Excavation 30.**

### *Metal*

2 x small coils which may have originated from something like a pocket watch (Figure 30)

1 x decorative metal piece (Figure 30)

1 x flat piece of copper which may be part of a bangle (Figure 31)



**Figure 30: Metal artefacts from Excavation 5.**



**Figure 31: Part of a copper bangle from Excavation 5.**

*Faunal remains (including beads)*

651 x very fragmented pieces of bone. Some of these are Bovid III, meaning cattle sized animals (see Plug 2014: 218-427). Although the remains have not been expertly analyzed, it is possible to say that these probably belong to cattle or an animal (non-domestic) of similar size.

18 x teeth or teeth fragments. These are most likely from herbivores. It could either be domesticated or non-domesticated animals

312 x shell fragments. At least three types were identified being freshwater muscle, Achatina (land snail) and a third unknown one (Figure 32).

1 x OES bead (Figure 33)

2 x broken OES beads (Figure 33)

1 x OES disk (Figure 33). The disc is a bead in the making.

1 x mother-of-pearl bead (Figure 33)

*Charcoal*

9 x fragments



**Figure 32: Shell fragments from Excavation 5.**



**Figure 33: OES disc and beads and mother-of-pearl bead from Excavation 5.**

## **CONCLUSION**

In analyzing the cultural material from the 2016 Steinaecker's Horse excavations at the site of Sardelli's shop, also known as the site where Bill Sanderson was interned, the excavated artefacts needs to be separated into two groups. The first is the artefacts uncovered from the shop itself (Excavation 1, 2 and 4) and the second, those from the middens (Excavation 3 and 5) excavated, as there is a possibility that the middens are not associated with the shop. Since most of the artefacts included in the surface collection do seem to be associated with the shop, that is included in the analysis of the shop.

Metal dominates the collection of artefacts associated with the shop. Out of a total of 611 artefacts, 431 (70,4%) are metal. One however needs to understand that metal can easily be over-represented on an archaeological site as it is more durable than other artefacts. Most of the metal artefacts (373) are pieces of wire of which many have been fixed to wooden poles around the original building. The large proportion is likely the cause of these not being washed away during floods as it was fitted to heavier objects. Again this therefore is an over-representation.

Nails numbered 76. Nails would have been used either in the construction of the building or in fittings for wooden boxes and therefore one would expect a reasonably high number. The screws (2 wood screws) can be counted with nails as it has a similar function. Other metal artefacts counted as follows: pot handles - 3; wire hooks – 2; and one each for food tins, a buckle, a rod and a bottle cap. This confirms that many artefacts were probably washed away due to the site's closeness to the river. The hooks may have been used to keep a door in place, or something similar and therefore also have a function associated with the construction of the building. It may also have been used to hang items on against the walls of the building.

Only the pot lids gave an indication of activities at the site, namely cooking, or perhaps even the selling of cooking pots. They were all found outside of the core of the building (see main report) and therefore indicated cooking outside or on the verandah. The buckle seems to be that of the bit or bridle of a horse, mule or donkey. This probably belonged to Sardelli or one of the soldiers. If the latter, it is the only artefact with a possible military origin from the site. The food tin and bottle cap may be from items sold or used at the site. The rod can have many different functions and can perhaps be of a later period.

The lack of material indicating function for the different sections of the house indicates that loose items were utilized, which had either washed away or was removed when the site was abandoned. This is corroborated by the fact that very little other types of artefacts were excavated.

The second largest group is glass, which counted 123 (20%). None of these include remains of bottles, which one would suspect since Sardelli sold alcoholic beverages here (Pienaar 2012: 321). It has to be indicated that Pienaar does call this 'alcoholic concoctions of dubious origin' which creates the impression that it was brewed on site. It may therefore not have been in glass containers. The largest sub-group is clear flat window glass, which amounts to 115 pieces. These seem to date within the timeframe of the site (1890's) and like other

artefacts was part of the construction of the building. Most of these were found towards the west of the core of the building, indicating that at least one window was installed here.

The other 8 artefacts are all glass beads, but these came from the surface collection. It may therefore not be associated with the shop at all. Glass are of course trade items, but are also worn for personal adornment.

Faunal material comprises 42 (6,8%) of the artefacts. None of these could be positively identified. It may be remains of food, but it may also originate from animals which died on site after it had been abandoned.

Charcoal counts 8 (1,4%) of artefacts. It probably originated from burnt wood which was part of the building. Three artefacts (0,5%), indeed were pieces of wood of which one seems to have been either a sections of fence pole or a pole used in the building. These artefacts thus again indicates the dominance of construction material. It needs to be included that many fence posts, made from lead wood, were noted on site and placed together to be photographed. It was however not collected. The other two were pieces of a fishing rod. These likely came from a single rod. It is unlikely that Sardelli would have sold such an item and therefore, if it is contemporary with the site, it may have been for his personal use or that of one of the soldiers. It however is more likely a later intrusion. It is known that other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse were re-used at a later stage, and it seems to have been the same here (Van Vollenhoven et.al. 2003: 38). This may have been by a game warden who knew of the existence of the site. It is interesting to note than one of the pieces of the rod was found towards the south and one towards the north of the building, indicating the washing away of artefacts from south to north, towards the river.

Four artefacts (0,7%) are stone tools. These were part of the surface collection and therefore most likely has no bearing on the occupation of Sardelli or Steinaecker's Horse on site.

The last category is plastic. Two artefacts (0,2%) are included here. The first is a piece of bakelite, which also seem to have come from a fishing rod. As it was found together with one of the wooden rod pieces in excavation 2, it likely originates from the same rod. The second is a button which likely also is a later intrusion on the site.

When looking at the artefacts uncovered from the middens one gets a different view. Faunal material dominates the collection with 78,6% (986) artefacts, but these all came from Excavation 5. The remainder of artefacts are glass 10,3% (129) artefacts, ceramics 10,1% (127) artefacts, charcoal 0,7% (9) artefacts, and metal 0,3% (4 artefacts).

It does seem as if Excavation 3 was either done on a deflated midden or it just represents the scatter of artefacts washed down from another area. It also is clear that Excavation 5 was done on a refuse midden, although some artefacts may have been later intrusions. It also needs to be recognized that faunal material are much more fragile than other artefacts and therefore the breakage may provide a skew picture.

Glass dominate at Excavation 3 with 127 out of 128 being made of glass. Most of these seem to be contemporary with the occupation of the shop and therefore this area most likely is associated therewith. A number of 80 artefacts (63%) of the glass from this excavation are from bottles which contained either alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages. These are also similar to what have been excavated on other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse. It

however, still remains very few artefacts in comparison with the other Steinaecker's Horse sites, as one also needs to remember that the non-alcoholic shards may have all originated from one Rose's Lime Juice bottle.

Window glass, similar to those found at the shop, contributed 43 shards (34%). This undoubtedly is associated with the shop. Therefore the remainder of glass artefacts excavated here, 4 beads (3%) most likely can also be linked thereto. As indicated beads are trade items, but are also worn for decorative purposes.

The remaining artefact at Excavation 3, is an earthenware ceramic shard. Unfortunately it has no decoration and therefore cannot be linked to a specific group of people. It does however suggest the presence of local people on the site and utilization of their cultural material, as was the case on other Steinaecker's Horse sites.

The remainder of artefacts from Excavation 5, are few in number compared to the faunal material. The second largest category is earthenware ceramics, counting 126 sherds. The similarity between most of these and those excavated at the nearby Gaza Gray site, indicate that the same group was present here and that the soldiers (and of course Sardelli) associated with them. The faunal remains referred to above, therefore likely indicate the use of cattle and a few other species as food source.

The four metal artefacts also suggest this association. The two small coils, perhaps from a pocket watch, and the decorative piece, clearly indicate contact with European people. Again it is doubtful that such expensive objects would have been sold here, but it represents personal items belonging to someone present on site. The only possible exception is the flat copper piece, likely from a bangle, which may be of an older origin and may have belonged to one of the local people.

The last two artefacts from this excavation are two glass beads. As indicated earlier, both may have been used in trade, but also are worn for personal adornment.

In conclusion, it can be deducted that the site was occupied by Sardelli and his associates as a shop. The lack of artefacts may indicate that they never stayed here, or at least not in the building. They may have stayed in a tent or wagon, or may have travelled to site when necessary, since one of his other shops is only about 10 km from here. The site was also utilized by Steinaecker's Horse, but no artefactual evidence indicates that this was done for any other purpose than imprisoning Bill Sanderson. No artefact with a specific military origin was found. It is perhaps possible that such artefacts were washed away as the site is at the confluence of two rivers. European artefacts identified are similar to what was found on other sites associated with Steinaecker's Horse, but also on other Anglo-Boer War sites. It however needs to be stated that these are typical European type artefacts, dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and may have been present on site even without the military connection. It therefore does not provide proof of a military presence here, but indeed of the utilization of the site by Europeans during this time. Therefore it is only the historical accounts which states that the site was not only a shop, but was also used by the military.

Most of the cultural material found are building material. This indicates the presence of a well-built structure, which is corroborated by finding a concrete floor. Historical information indicates that this is one of the shops of Sardelli and his partner Charlie Woodlands. The lack of large amounts of other artefacts seem to indicate that the site was abandoned at some time

and that furniture and provisions sold there were moved. The few indications of what may have been sold here, indicates that the customers likely did not use or consume many of that on site. The washing away of artefacts after the abandonment of the site, also may have influenced the richness of the archaeological deposit.

The indigenous pottery found at the site most probably are Nguni in origin and could date to the between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. This indicates an earlier occupation of the site (prior to the Anglo-Boer War and the presence of Steinaecker's Horse and Sardelli), although clearly there was local people who also settled in the vicinity of the site during the war as well (the Gaza Gray site is only about 2 km from here). Analysis of similar pottery from the Gaza Gray site (found during both the 2010 and 2011 excavations by Wim Biemond indicate that the pottery has an Nguni/Tsonga origin and possibly date to the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Biemond 2011: 2; 5-6, 9).

The glass beads from the excavations are similar to those found on all the other Steinaecker's Horse sites and have a European and Indian origin mostly. These beads were used as trade items and also worn for personal adornment.

The final analyses does suggests that both middens likely were associated with the shop and the people on site during that time. Faunal remains which was mainly found at Excavation 5, form the highest category of the total sample. It indicates a midden where waste was discarded, but mainly domestic waste (i.e. remains of food/ slaughter activities). It seems to be mostly from BOV III indicating that cattle, likely from the nearby Gaza Gray site was used as a source of food together with some non-domesticated species. It should be considered that expert analysis of the faunal remains from the site (although the sample is relatively small) be undertaken to help determining the diet of the unit (over and above the tinned rations). The diet was likely also supplemented by fish, although no fish bones were found, but the remains of a fishing rod was.

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