

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON STEINAECKER'S HORSE, A BRITISH VOLUNTEER UNIT DURING THE ANGLO-BOER WAR

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The Steinaecker's Horse unit played an important role in the history of the Lowveld. The main task of the unit was to serve as border guard preventing Boers from contact with people in the Portuguese territory. For this reason, they established a number of outposts in the area. The members of the unit mostly consisted of local inhabitants of the Lowveld. Apart from these they also had 300 black troops, consisting of Swazi, Pedi and Shangane. Although little information is found in historical sources, extensive archaeological research provided evidence of this involvement.

The information gained from archaeological excavations on six of their outposts shows that Steinaecker's Horse frequently made use of members of the local black community for different tasks. Their outpost were placed close to existing communities, probably so that these people could be employed by them as scouts, servants, cooks and hunters. Members of some of the black military units, such as the Native Police and Black Watch were present at outposts manned by Steinaecker's Horse, but the unit apparently also had black members.

On almost all the sites artefacts linked to the black people have been identified, including ceramic pottery, glass beads and traditional weapons. The amount of faunal remains excavated at these outposts indicate that they supplemented their diet by eating game. The Steinaecker's Horse unit and some of its members greatly influenced the history of the Kruger National Park, including the preservation of wildlife. Members were later employed as game rangers as they knew the area and the local people well. This included black members. The paper will indicate how archaeology can be used to supplement known information, in this case, about Steinaecker's Horse. Specific emphasis will be placed on the contribution of archaeology to the understanding of black involvement in the unit.

PAPER / NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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

Some of these were in the Eastern Transvaal, including the Lowveld. 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, Komatipoort and at Barberton (Bornman 2004: 1; Van Vollenhoven & Van den Bos 1997: 50-52).

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

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). The 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).

During a war, little time is actually spent on warlike activities and this was certainly the case with Steinaecker's Horse. The question therefore is how the soldiers spent their time in-between any military encounters they may have been engaged in. The hypothesis of this study was thus to determine the lifestyle, daily activities and everyday circumstances at the different outposts of the Steinaecker's Horse unit. This can be determined from the cultural material excavated at these sites.

THE ROLE OF STEINAECKER'S HORSE DURING THE WAR

After establishing the unit in 1901, Von Steinaecker initially made his base at Nomahasha. In March of that year the unit raided Bremersdorp (Matsebula 1972: 87), an incident showing that Von Steinaecker himself engaged in controversial actions. During the capture of Bremersdorp they 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 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, found in the National Archives in Pretoria, sheds light on some of these activities. 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 and Oshoek. 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; Personal communication: A van Dyk).

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 (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).

The unit regularly confiscated livestock. Harry Wolhuter, who was a member of Steinaecker's Horse, for instance indicates how they took possession of a herd of cattle belonging to Abel Erasmus and took it to Sabi Bridge (Wolhuter 1948: 57-59). Pienaar (2012: 413) also indicated that they frequently seized herds of cattle.

Carruthers & Pienaar (2012: 474) describe 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 furthermore 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).

A British subject, Bill Sanderson, was also captured by them and accused of working with the Boers. His livestock were captured, and he was never compensated although he proved to be innocent (Van Vollenhoven & Pelsler 2004:18). 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. From archival 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 2835/01; 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 (Pelsler 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 was 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).

Contrary to the above accounts, there were some positive incidents reported on the unit. 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).

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 the latter incident, another unit, called Steinaecker's Horse Special Squadron, was raised for service in the Pietersburg Lowveld under Colonel Colenbrander (Stirling 1907: 275). The Special Squadron however operated as a separate unit, but used the reputable name of Steinaecker's Horse to their advantage.

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). The corps was however only disbanded and replaced by a detachment of the South African Constabulary on 7 February 1903 (Diespecker 1996: 101). 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, being caught by lions and crocodiles, as well as suicide (Woolmore 2006: 337).

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

THE CONTRIBUTION OF STEINAECKER'S HORSE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

It is interesting that perhaps the most important contribution of Steinaecker's Horse has no relevance to the war, but is the role the unit played in the establishment of the

Kruger National Park. The unit and specifically some of its members, greatly influenced the history 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 which 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 as it instituted rules for the members of Steinaecker's Horse to stop them engaging in 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).

It is interesting to know that Greenhill-Gardyne only became a member of Steinaecker's Horse after joining them on a patrol between Komatipoort and Sabi Bridge which offered him the opportunity for hunting (Wolhuter 2010: 11). He originally was a member of the Gordon Highlanders (Greenhill-Gardyne 1972: 246). He must have realised the consequences of uncontrolled hunting and thus wrote the above mentioned report.

When the unit started operating in this area, they had a negative effect on the wildlife, due to their hunting. According to Major Stevenson-Hamilton's report for 1903 the members of Steinaecker's Horse "...got their meat almost entirely from the game which

they shot.” (Skukuza Archives, report 29.11.1903). He also stated that all the natives that were employed by Steinaecker’s Horse were armed with Martini Henry rifles and that they were killing animals more irresponsibly than the white men.

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

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

The report by Greenhill-Gardyne 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.

STEINAECKER’S HORSE SITES

During the research on Steinaecker’s Horse, a number of outposts were identified. These include sites inside and outside of the Kruger National Park, but the archaeological research was limited to the park.

Sites outside of the Kruger National Park:

- Bremersdorp
- Nomahasha
- Signal Hill on the Kalishan Mountain
- Komatipoort headquarters (site was identified and documented)
- Fort Mpisane
- Kilo 104

Sites in the Kruger National Park:

Sites not physically located:

- Muntshe
- Crocodile Bridge
- Outspan
- Nwanedzi
- Mbiyamithi Spruit

Sites located but with no/limited archaeological potential:

- Salitje
- Bottelkop

Sites excavated:

- Northernmost Outpost (Letaba/ Makhadzi)
- Sabi Bridge (Skukuza)
- Ngotso Mouth (Balule)
- Gaza Gray
- Sardelli's shop at Sabi poort
- Gomondwane
- N'wamuriwa

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The excavation of the sites and the documentation of features, structures and artefacts thereon gives an insight into issues like who were present at these outposts, contact with local communities and social differentiation. Furthermore, it assists in obtaining an idea of the lifestyle, daily activities and everyday circumstances at the Steinaecker's Horse outposts.

Intangible culture

Intangible culture includes aspects like faith, communication, the arts, recreation and inter-cultural influence. These issues can only be indirectly deduced from certain artefacts.

Finding cultural objects associated with both white as black people, serves as proof that apart from the white soldiers of Steinaecker's Horse, there were also black

soldiers and local inhabitants present on the sites. Other sources corroborate this (Cattrick 1959:179; Stirling 1907:274; SA: Native Police 1902-1903; SA: Stevenson-Hamilton 1930:3). Indications of artefacts normally associated with one group (e.g. indigenous pottery) at an area associated with another group, indicate mutual influence.

Glass beads and pendants also show another intangible dimension. Apart from being used for personal adornment, it may have also served the purpose of being a lucky charm. A good example here is the fake lion dew claws found at the Makhadzi site.

Remains of musical instruments are another example of intangible culture. Music is frequently used in social activities, or by an individual sitting around a camp fire and playing an instrument while longing for something else. Remains of Jew's harps and mouth organs were identified (Pienaar 1990:349). One of the members of the unit, trooper BT Train, indicated his occupation as musician (Woolmore 2006:300).

Social and every day activities are also examples of the intangible. A number of champagne bottles with heads clearly cut off were found at Sabi Bridge. The ritual of cutting the head off a champagne bottle with a sword is unique to the cavalry and since Steinaecker's Horse was a cavalry unit, this makes sense. It can also be linked to camaraderie which runs much further than a single military unit, since cavalry units from different armies also practised this ritual.

Material culture

Food and drink

On most of the sites a large number of remains of food tins (bully beef, fish and ham) were identified. It indicates that Steinaecker's Horse was well provisioned with military rations. Other artefacts found show that food distributed to them included Bovril, sweet oil, baking powder and a variety of sauces, e.g. Worcestershire sauce. Baking powder tins suggest that they baked on site and since a number of members of the unit indicated their trade as bakers, this is no surprise. This includes trooper CM Hay, E Morgan and WH Williams (Woolmore 2006:207, 256, 314).

Rations were provided frequently from military stores and included pickles, whisky and other groceries (Stevenson-Hamilton 1952:14). Wolhuter indicates that they were provided with tinned vegetables and fruit (Wolhuter 1973:50).

The soldiers of Steinaecker's Horse did supplement their diet with fresh meat. Faunal material from steenbok, zebra, blue wildebeest and impala were excavated. It is known that members of the unit hunted and that this was the only source of meat at certain outposts (Stevenson-Hamilton 1952:14). Some of the members of the unit indicated their trade as butchers, for instance FA Carrington and A Tempest (Woolmore 2006:160, 298). Ammunition excavated that was not of military origin included cartridges from shot guns. Military weapons may also have been used for hunting.

Faunal material from domesticated species were also excavated and included sheep, cattle and goats. These animals were obtained from the local people, but were also confiscated from farmers (Stevenson-Hamilton 1952:14-15; Pienaar 1990:347). Fish bones were also identified as well as those from birds like guinea-fowl and pheasant. Shells from tortoises, land snails and eggs indicates that these were also consumed.

Some of the ceramic and glass objects found had a household function. This includes dinner plates, cups, saucers, cooking pots, egg cups and wine glasses. Metal objects associated with food include parts of pots, knives, forks, spoons, coffee pots, a grid and enamel plate. Food was likely prepared on open fires. At the Northern outpost a cooking shelter was excavated and at Komatipoort remains of a primus stove was found. Water provision was very important, both for cooking and hygienic purposes. At Komatipoort two large water tanks were found. Handles of buckets were also identified at some of the other sites.

Ceramic and glass shards excavated give information on the liquid refreshments available to the soldiers. Alcoholic beverages included gin, rum, whiskey, brandy, schnapps, wine, champagne and beer, while non-alcoholic drinks were represented by soda and mineral water, ginger beer and Rose's lime juice. The large number of objects in this category is an indication that drinking was a popular activity on site. Gin was also believed to be a counter to malaria. A section of a cork, the lead seals of liquor bottles and wire from champagne bottles was also found. Soda water was also produced on site. At the Northern outpost small CO² cylinders were excavated. One of the members of the unit, trooper HW Warcup, indicated his trade as being a producer of mineral water (Woolmore 2006:307).

Transport

At the Northern outpost and at Sabi bridge parts of the undercarriage of small carts were found. This was probably used to transport ammunition or other supplies. Faunal material from donkeys indicates that these animals were present on site and that they were probably used as draught animals. It is known that ox wagons were used to carry supplies between the different outposts (Stevenson-Hamilton 1952:14).

Since Steinaecker's Horse was a cavalry unit, they used horses. A historical photograph shows some of the officers of Steinaecker's Horse on horseback, while artefacts associated with horses were identified at Sabi bridge. These include horseshoe nails, metal rings, buckles from bridles and pliers used for removing nails from horseshoes. The unit did have veterinarians, for instance lieutenants JW Edward and EC McCrystal (Woolmore 2006:183, 245).

Many objects associated with the railway were found at Sabi bridge. It is known that the members of the unit used the railway to transport provisions between Komatipoort and Sabi bridge and even the soldiers made use of this means of transport (Woolmore 2006:18). At Komatipoort a coco pan was found which may also have been used to transport provisions.

Technology

Most of the artefacts excavated can be linked to technology and most of these are discussed under other sections. Remaining aspects include the provision of light. The handle and cover of a paraffin can and lamp was found at the Northern outpost and the remains of an oil lamp at Sabi bridge. Many pieces of wire were excavated. This could have had a variety of functions. A section of copper wire found at Sabi bridge may have been used in a mechanism to blow up the blacksmith workshop, as it is similar to explosive devices of the time.

Axe heads excavated at the Northern outpost, was used to chop wood. This was probably done to obtain wood for building material or repair to other equipment, to obtain fire wood and to build a branch-fence around the camp. A number of hoe blades found were probably is linked to agricultural activities, but it is unlikely that the soldiers would have planted crops. It was thus probably used by local people who were servants at the outposts.

Personal care

Some of the excavated artefacts can be linked to the personal hygiene of soldiers. Two examples are fragments of Odol mouth wash containers and toothpaste tubes. The cover of a shoe polish tin was found, something that definitely can be expected in a military context.

Medicine containers are also discussed under this section. Remains of medicine bottles and ointment containers were identified. Some of the illnesses the soldiers had to cope with were malaria and black water fever (Wolhuter 1948:46), but based on the large quantities of liquor bottles on the sites it seems that they rather believed in the medicinal power of gin to ward of fever. Remains of syringes was also found, and it is known that the unit had a number of surgeons, including captain AJ Campbell and lieutenant AN Grieve (Woolmore 2006:159, 199). They also had pharmacists, namely corporals W Jasper and WJ Wright (Woolmore 2006:221, 320) and a dentist, corporal A Baagoe (Woolmore 2006:143). The only kind of medicine that could specifically be identified from bottle fragments is Eno's fruit salt, indicating that stomach problems was one of the ailments the soldiers had to cope with. Refuse middens at the outposts as well as a specific storage area for empty bottles at Sabi bridge, is an indication of containing refuse which may have assisted in controlling illness.

Clothing and paraphernalia

A large variety of objects related to clothing were found. This includes cuff-links as well as many different buttons, some with a definite military origin. Buttons made from wood or bone were probably manufactured on site. Beads, bangles, earrings, parts of pocket watches and finger rings are examples of paraphernalia. Remains of shoes were also

identified, including the heel irons from military boots. Buckles from belts and braces, made from copper, bronze and iron were also excavated.

Two tailors' scissors found at the Northern outpost suggest that clothes were mended. Other objects in this regard include pins, needles made from bone and an awl. The unit had tailors as members, for instance troopers CJ Gooden and AW Sinclair (Woolmore 2006:194, 288).

Handwork

Mending clothes is of course a form of handwork. Making buttons, needles etc. also are handwork activities the members of Steinaecker's Horse were engaged in. Three fake lion dew claws made from bone, and a coin with holes to carry around the neck are also examples. Rings and bangles also may have been produced on site.

Ceramic pottery found may have been manufactured on site, but again would likely have been associated with local inhabitants. So is a hand-made arrow head which was identified at the Northern outpost.

Some of the nails excavated were hand-made, whilst others were bent to serve as hooks (e.g. for hanging clothing). Others were bent to form fish-hooks, but fish hooks bent from wire was also found. These were likely done by the soldiers in order to catch fish.

Two files excavated at the Northern outpost, was probably used to make other objects. Pocket knives could also have been used for this purpose. Wire with sharpened points are not only a product of handwork, but may also have been used as tools in making other objects.

Architecture

The architecture of Steinaecker's Horse is probably not unique as it would be similar to typical military buildings of the time. These were mainly pre-fabricated buildings made from corrugated iron. Examples are the blockhouse at Sabi bridge and buildings at Komatipoort. These buildings nevertheless had stone, brick and concrete foundations which the soldiers had to build themselves. A number of builders were members of the unit, including W Cartwright, TH Moore and G Povall (Woolmore 2006:161, 256, 270). Since most of the buildings identified were at least partially formally built, it can be assumed that these people were responsible for erecting the buildings.

The blacksmith workshop at Sabi bridge was partially made from bricks and also had wooden beams. It likely also had a corrugated iron roof. Another building at this site had walls made from corrugated iron, wooden posts and clay. Metal sleepers from the railway were also utilised. These are unique features of an adaptation to their circumstances. The building may have been used as offices, garrison's quarters or a

mess hall. Structures without formal floors were also excavated here. This includes three storage areas with walls made from wooden poles and clay.

Similar structures were identified at Komatipoort. A hut and cooking shelters at the Northern outpost were also made from clay and wooden posts. This hut and the large building at Sabi bridge had earthen floors, an indication of adaption to local building styles. Further indications of architecture include window glass, a window latch and the remains of a wooden door, sections of locks, hut clay, nails, screws and washers.

At Komatipoort various examples of architecture were identified. This included blockhouses, a fort, steps, footpaths, water furrows, storage rooms, a stable etc. Stone was mainly used in construction. The remains of tents, used for different purposes may also be mentioned here. It includes the eyes from sails and tent pegs.

Trades and occupations

Different trades and occupations have been mentioned above. The most important tasks of the members of Steinaecker's Horse was of course to be soldiers. Military activities would have included doing patrols, target practice, standing guard and being involved in skirmishes. Most of the ammunition excavated is of military calibre and confirms these activities. Having fire-arms probably meant that a gunsmith was needed. Trooper JM Mills was indeed one (Woolmore 2006:253).

There are many associated activities needed to keep a military unit going. One of the excavations at Sabi bridge seems to have unearthed a quarter-master's store, suggesting that such a person with personnel must have been present. Woolmore indicates that lieutenant JW Dallamore was the quarter-master of Steinaecker's Horse (Woolmore 2006:173). Control over equipment and the handling thereof as well as dispatching provisions to the different outposts would have been part of their duties. A small weight excavated, may be linked to these activities. One of the duties of sergeant Harry Wolhuter was to transport provisions and equipment between the different outposts (Woolmore 2006:318).

Although Woolmore lists the trades of each member of the unit, it does not mean that they were necessarily utilised in the same capacity. He mentions the following occupations: builders, blacksmiths, barmen, auditors, fire-fighters, engineers, policemen, wagon makers, electricians, glass cutters, miners, cooks, musicians and barbers (Woolmore 2006:138-335). Since Steinaecker's Horse was a cavalry unit one can expect trades linked to horses. Trooper JA Barnes was a blacksmith, S Cooper and RC Edlin horse breakers, J Cox a horse trainer, G Dillman and JH Healy saddle makers and FJ Lambe a saddle and bridle maker (Woolmore 2006:146, 169-170, 178, 182, 207, 231).

A large number of soldiers had construction trades and one can assume that they assisted in building activities. At Sabi bridge troopers Tom Boyd and Clinkers Willis were the train drivers between this post and Komatipoort (Woolmore 2006:18).

Blacksmith activities were also practised here and can be seen in hammer and anvil stones on site.

There must have been cooks to prepare food for the unit. One of these was trooper CO White (Woolmore 2006:310). An associated activity to food preparation is the obtaining of food and fishing, and hunting serves this purpose. These food sources had to be slaughtered and it is known that there were a number of butchers in the unit, for instance trooper A Tempest (Woolmore 2006:298). Pocket knives may have been used for this purpose. Fauna material deriving from small animals such as frogs, indicate that these had to be captured. It was probably used as bait when fishing.

Another task was carrying water to site, seen in handles from buckets that were excavated. Tailors' scissors indicate the mending of clothes, which was likely done by members of the unit who served as tailors. Artefacts associated with writing were also found. This includes fragments from ink containers, a paper clip and the point of a flood pen. These could have been personal items, but also used for official correspondence of the unit.

Other objects found indicating trades are shovels, picks, chisels and a crowbar. The remains of purses found at Sabi bridge were likely used to pay wages. There would therefore have been a paymaster and Woolmore indeed indicates that there were several paymasters like lieutenant A Gray (Woolmore 2006:197).

Protection and defence

Since Steinaecker's Horse was a military unit, activities of a military nature would have been the order of the day. Target practice, patrols, sentry duty and skirmishes have already been mentioned. The ammunition found, much of which was of a military calibre, is an indication of these activities. Standing guard of course had more than a military function as guards had to guard against wild animals as well. On a number of occasions lions attacked both men and horses.

Some of the buildings at Komatipoort had a military function. These include blockhouses, cannon positions, a fort and trenches. A few military structures were identified at the other outposts. A photograph of Sabi bridge indicates that it did have a blockhouse (Pienaar 1990:345). At N'wamuriwa trenches were also discovered. The main function of the blockhouse at Sabi bridge would have been to protect the temporary bridge over the river. Together with a camp on both sides of the river it would have been difficult to attack. Other artefacts of military origin include uniform buttons, heel irons from boots and hinges from ammunition cases.

Other

Metal hoops from wooden barrels were found at various sites. Barrels had many functions, but were nothing more than storage containers. At Sabi bridge a hoop was

found at the blacksmith workshop, indicating that a barrel filled with water was located here to cool hot iron.

Small bronze crosses found here were probably decorative elements on purses used for payment of wages. Two coins excavated also indicate the presence of money on site which may have been used to purchase personal items.

Some of the soldiers smoked. The remains of kaolin pipes and the bronze lids of such pipes were identified. The tail of an ornamental animal, made from bronze was also found. It was probably used by someone who wanted to decorate his living quarters.

CONCLUSION

From the above it is clear that Steinaecker's Horse played an important role in the Lowveld during the Anglo-Boer War. This included the eventual establishment of the Kruger National Park.

It is interesting to note that their outposts were mostly located close to existing communities and that the placement thereof perhaps was to a lesser extent influenced by military-strategic reasons. On the other hand, the communities lived close to known routes and thus the camps were strategically placed on possible routes the Boers could have utilised.

By analysing and interpreting the different cultural objects excavated on the sites, an explanation of life at such a military outpost can be given. At many of the sites, the artefacts reflect social and racial differentiation. This refers to the types of artefacts identified as well as to different location within one site. Thus, it seems the officers were separated from the men. Also, the white soldiers of Steinaecker's Horse stayed separate from the local inhabitants and black soldiers at these sites. This can be seen from artefacts such as indigenous pottery, glass beads and even traditional weapons at certain sections of the sites as opposed to other sections where European type ceramics (porcelain and stone ware) were found, together with remains of glass bottles, military buttons and ammunition from the time.

Military artefacts excavated are proof of these sites being linked to the Anglo-Boer War. Apart from these military artefacts, the archaeological material assists in forming an idea of the daily life at these sites. It can be used to make assumptions about the activities the soldiers and other people on site were engaged in and provides insight into the daily activities at such an outpost. Archaeological research thus brings insights and new perspectives into Steinaecker's Horse. As such it is an example which can be utilised in other research projects and sites associated with the Anglo-Boer War.

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