



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Archaeological research of the Ngotsomouth outpost of Steinaecker's Horse in the Kruger National Park**

From 3-16 August 2008 an archaeological excursion will again be conducted at one of the outposts of the Steinaecker's Horse unit in the Kruger National Park. This time it will be the site at Ngotsomouth, close to the Balulu rest camp. The project is lead by the well-known historical archaeologist, Dr. Anton van Vollenhoven. The project is undertaken by the research department of Archaetnos Archaeologists, of which he is one of the directors. Various students from different universities partake in the excavations every year.

The aim of the Archaetnos Research Department is to do archaeological and historical research. The Steinaecker's Horse project is now running for its eleventh year..With other commitments and projects, the Kruger National Park cannot fund this project. Therefore Archaetnos is looking for possible sponsors to assist in funding this project.

The Steinaecker's Horse project was launched in 1997. The current phase will last until 2009 and has been approved by the SA National Parks (SANParks). The first phase concentrated on the most Northern outpost of the military unit, close to Letaba. After that the post at Sabi Bridge (Skukuza) was excavated. The focus is now on the outpost at Ngotsomouth. This is at the confluence between the Ngotso and Olifants Rivers.

Steinaecker's Horse was a military unit whofought on the side of the British during the Anglo-Boer-War (1899 – 1902). The unit consisted of local inhabitants from the Lowveld-region, including the indigenous people who worked as soldiers, servants and chefs. The unit's most important task was to ensure that the Boers did not make contact with Portuguese supporters in Mozambique, in order to arrange for food and war supplies.

The importance of this project lies within the fact that very little research has been done about the Anglo-Boer-War, from an archaeological perspective. Furthermore it creates the opportunity to do research on the involvement of the indigenous people during the war, an area that did not receive much attention during the past years from researchers.

The terrain at Ngotsomouth is unique in the sense that it was a very small outpost and therefore may differ considerably from the other two excavated already. It would be interesting to see the amount of cultural material left at such a site in relation to the larger ones. The other point of interest would be to see whether the archaeological material differs from those at the other sites and to try to determine what this could mean. . site is only mentioned in one historical document,

namely a book written by the famous game ranger Harry Wolhuter who was a member of Steinaecker's Horse during the war.

It is trusted that it would be possible to determine aspects such as the life style of the unit and get an indication of what things they did to keep them busy apart from the regular war activities. This year's excavations will focus on the possible remains of buildings on the site as well as on the refuse middens which usually contain most of the archaeological material.. It is aimed at determining what the functions of these were in order to get an idea of the way of life and daily activities members of the unit were involved in.

These will then be compared with the information from the other sites so that the history of this unit may eventually be completed.

The unit also contributed to the founding of the Kruger National Park. Rules implemented by them to conserve the game in the area, were also used as guide lines when the Park was founded. Quite a few Steinaecker's Horse soldiers became some of the first game rangers of the new Kruger National Park, e.g. Harry Wolhuter.

Please contact Dr. Anton van Vollenhoven, regarding the research at 083 291 6104 or [antonv@archaetnos.co.za](mailto:antonv@archaetnos.co.za).

Inquiries with regards to possible assistance – donations /sponsorships / etc. – can be discussed with Johan van Vollenhoven - 011 256 0647 / 083 235 6921 or [logistiek@archaetnos.co.za](mailto:logistiek@archaetnos.co.za).

Website: [www.archaetnos.co.za](http://www.archaetnos.co.za)