Surveying in Africa today – Adventure or nightmare?

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Abstract

For the South African Surveyor venturing north of the Orange/Limpopo to undertake survey work is an event. With the possible exceptions of Namibia and Botswana, surveying in Africa is usually quite different to the local experience. A nightmare for the surveyor?

The author shares some experiences and observations based on personal forays into sub-Saharan Africa, mainly in Angola and the DRC.

What is different to the South African survey experience? What is the same? What are the unique challenges? What are the misconceptions?

The author expands on various aspects, from the purely technical issue of establishing survey control networks where none exist, to the more esoteric question of living in lonely, remote camps, and the challenges of identifying local talent for skills transfer.

It will be shown that modern technology and the surveyor’s own ingenuity more often than not turn the potential African survey nightmare into an adventure.

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