

HIB Number: 000873
Date/Time Transmitted: 09/06/2011 02:54 PM
Subject: UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE IN VICINITY OF GERALDTON, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Comment:
Action Area: HDSO

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SENSITIVITY: This issue is considered sensitive due to the risk from Unexploded Ordnance (UXO). The quantity found (30+) is significant as is the potential impact on an infrastructure worksite in WA (a development being undertaken by Queensland Rail). This issue has potential to escalate rapidly without warning and there has been a high level of local media interest shown.

KEY ISSUES:

- One UXO was discovered in a pile of gravel delivered to Queensland Rail project, 10km from Geraldton, WA, at 1300 hours on 5 Sep 11. The gravel originated from a nearby pit in Geraldton. A subsequent search has found at least 30 additional UXO buried in this pile of gravel. All UXO discovered to date are obsolete aircraft practice bombs that are no longer in the RAAF inventory.
- This necessitated the closure (by WA Police (WAPOL), on advice from Defence), of both the site where the gravel was sourced from and the Queensland Rail work site.
- There is a potential requirement for all gravel extracted from the same site to be thoroughly searched. This is likely to impact other local infrastructure projects.
- WAPOL is the lead authority on site for this activity. Defence is providing support as requested by the WAPOL.
- There has been local media interest.

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BACKGROUND:

WA Police contacted Joint Logistics Unit West, Explosive Ordnance Services at 1300 hours on 05 Sep 2011.

Gravel delivered to a Queensland Rail project in the vicinity of Geraldton exposed one UXO. Subsequent search identified at least 30 additional UXO in the same gravel pile. All UXO discovered to date are obsolete aircraft practice bombs that are no longer in the RAAF inventory.

The gravel originated from a pit located at [REDACTED], and is operated by [REDACTED], a Western Australian based earthworks company.

Defence are investigating whether the site of the gravel pit was previously used as a weapons range, or may have been used as a disposal site for Defence explosive ordnance.

On advice from Defence, WA Police closed both the gravel pit and the Queensland Rail worksite.

As the gravel pit supplies gravel to a number of construction sites, any significant closure of the pit has a potential impact on several infrastructure projects in the area.

Queensland Rail will report the current issue through their chain of command as a construction delay.

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TALKING POINTS

- **Defence is responding to a request from Western Australian Police regarding the discovery of unexploded ordnance at a construction site near Geraldton, WA.**
- **The nature and origin of the unexploded ordnance is currently being investigated by Defence. At this time Defence is unable to ascertain the origin of the unexploded ordnance.**
- **Under the control of the Western Australian Police, Australian Defence Force personnel will take appropriate action to dispose of the unexploded ordnance.**

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