



Australian Government

Department of Defence

Quail Island Air Weapons Range Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Hazard Reduction Project, Stage Two

Newsletter No. 6
Monday 26 March 2012

WELCOME

Welcome to the second year and next stage of the Quail Island Air Weapons Range Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Hazard Reduction Project.

We had a successful first year (2011) for the project and we look forward to building on that foundation in 2012.

This newsletter marks the commencement of the second year of operation of the project. In this edition we'll report on the timing of the re-introduction of the exclusion zones around the islands, planned project activity and we'll introduce you to the new project manager, David Thomas, who replaces Geoff Robinson. We'll also review the achievements from Stage One of the project.

It's only a few short weeks now before the G-tek Australia Pty Limited project team, led by Greg Guthrie, will be back on the islands conducting a deeper search for UXO.

If you have any questions about the project, please don't hesitate to call David Thomas:
M 0427 680 685



STAGE TWO BEGINS

The second stage of the search for UXO will commence on 2 April 2012. With safety considerations an absolute priority, Defence has again re-activated the Defence Practice Area Exclusion Zone around the islands. This means only people with valid permission from the Department of Defence will be permitted to enter the exclusion zone which is measured as a circle of 5,500 metres radius from the centre of Quail Island, an area of approximately 9,500 hectares.

Defence accepts that there are some organisations and individuals who have a genuine need to access the exclusion zone. As was the case last year, permission to access the area will be subject to conditions and approval granted on a case by case basis.

Anyone wishing to visit the exclusion zone needs to contact either:

Project Manager, David Thomas: M 0427 680 685
E david.thomas23@defence.gov.au
E davidthomas45@bigpond.com

Greg Guthrie: M 0418 977 424, E gguthrie@g-tek.biz

Project Director, Vicki Pearce M 0439 365 842
E vicki.pearce1@defence.gov.au.

All other members of the community are encouraged to stay well clear of the islands in the coming months as the search for unexploded ordnance continues.



INTRODUCING OUR NEW PROJECT MANAGER

David Thomas is the new project manager for the Quail Island Air Weapons Range Unexploded Ordnance Hazard Reduction Project. He replaces Major Geoff Robinson.

As a former Army officer, David has been working in the UXO speciality for more than 20 years. He has designed and managed ordnance-related projects in all states of Australia and in Canada, Germany and Papua New Guinea. David has developed regulatory documentation and guidance material on UXO management for the Queensland Government and for Department of Defence.

David is a consultant adviser to the management team of the Defence National UXO Office and is responsible for the day to day management of the Quail Island Hazard Reduction project.

“Unexploded ordnance in this area poses a potentially substantial risk to people visiting the islands, which is a key reason why Defence is undertaking this hazard reduction program”.

“I am looking forward to working together with stakeholders to ensure the project continues to run smoothly as we move into the second stage,”
- Mr Thomas said.

WHAT'S PLANNED FOR STAGE TWO

Stage Two will see the commencement of deep imaging on Quail and Bare Sands Islands.

Using digital magnetic or electromagnetic search equipment, Defence contractor G-tek Australia Pty Ltd will survey the area to locate any unexploded ordnance that might be lying beneath the surface of the island.

The magnetic technology records the exact positioning of variations in the intensity of the earth's magnetic field, which may be taken as frequently as seven times per metre covered. From this an image is generated showing the locations of items with high magnetic value or anomalies.

Specialist geophysicists then examine the data to predict the location, mass and depth of the anomaly. As in the first stage, if any UXO are found, they will be disabled, removed and disposed of appropriately by Defence explosive ordnance disposal specialists.



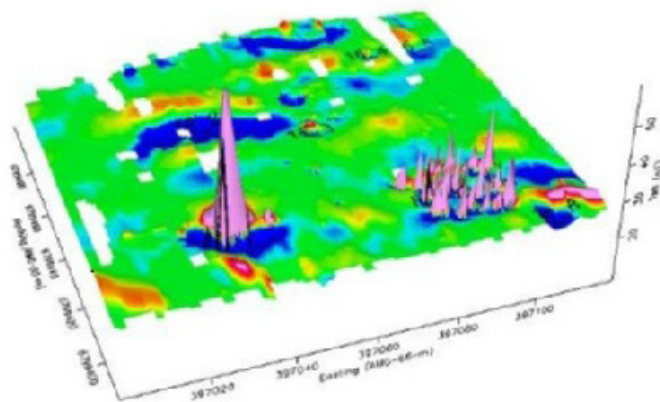
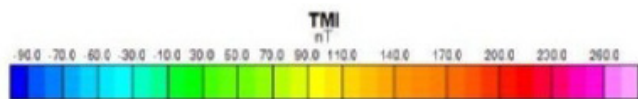
Photo Credit: Betty Franklin (think N ink 2011)



The deep imaging investigation on Bare Sand Island has been scheduled first. All efforts will be made to complete the hazard reduction activity, including detonation of any discovered UXO, before the peak turtle nesting season begins in mid-May. This will ensure turtle habitats are not harmed and that access to the island is safe for turtle tours and researchers.

After the reduction activity has concluded on Bare Sand Island, G-tek will then commence the deep imaging investigation on Quail Island.

At the conclusion of this stage, hazardous material will have been removed to depths of either the water table or up to 3 metres.



Computer generated image showing major variations in the earth's magnetic field. Photo Credit: G-Tek Australia



RESULTS FROM STAGE ONE

Stage One of the project was completed with seven high explosive ordnance items discovered and disposed of successfully.

A formal visual search was conducted on all three islands and a shallow search on Bare Sands Island and Djadjalbit Island. More than 50% of Quail Island was shallowly searched, with the majority of the activity centred on the bombing channel which has the highest density of UXO and range debris.

As well as disposing of the discovered UXO, G-tek removed more than thirty tonnes of range debris from the island which included casing fragments from bombs, practice bombs, old target material and dilapidated signs. Considerable amounts of non-ordnance related refuse, most of which had been washed up on the high tide, were also removed from the islands on a daily basis.

The first stage was an important step in the lead up to the deeper ground examination in stage two. The probability that more hazardous items will be found and cleared is high.

If you have any information you would like to put forward for our next newsletter or if there is any part of the project you would like to read more about, please send your contributions or queries through to Sophie Morrison on:

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