

## Information Data Sheet

**Category** Artillery Ranges

**Description** Artillery ranges mainly involve the firing of projectiles such as shells. Close combat munitions, such as mortars, and larger ordnance, including bombs, are also occasionally used on such ranges.

Historically, the majority of artillery ranges were situated along the coast, allowing the test-firing of shells out to sea. As early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, coastal gun batteries test-fired their weapons into the adjacent sea.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several inland artillery ranges were established on areas of moorland and open plains, well away from habitation. This allowed the testing of a variety of shells and rocket projectiles, and was often carried out in collaboration with RAF aircraft.

Most artillery ranges still in use are under MoD control and access is carefully managed.



Firing point of artillery range currently in use

**Hazard** Artillery ranges provide a potential UXO hazard from shells and other projectiles that may have failed to detonate during training. In the marine environment, in particular, there would often be no requirement to remove any unexploded projectiles.

Typically, the greatest concentration of ordnance at an artillery range will be around any target/impact area, which are often recorded on range templates or evident from aerial photographs.

Whilst efforts would have been made to clear artillery ranges of UXO after training exercises, the potential something was missed can never be discounted. Simultaneously, the sometimes unpredictable nature of firing shells and other projectiles could result in poor accuracy and there are records of UXO resulting from such activity being found outside designated range areas.

Today, there is a much more rigid protocol for clearing artillery ranges of UXO and, with improved equipment and techniques, clearance is far more thorough than on wartime ranges.