

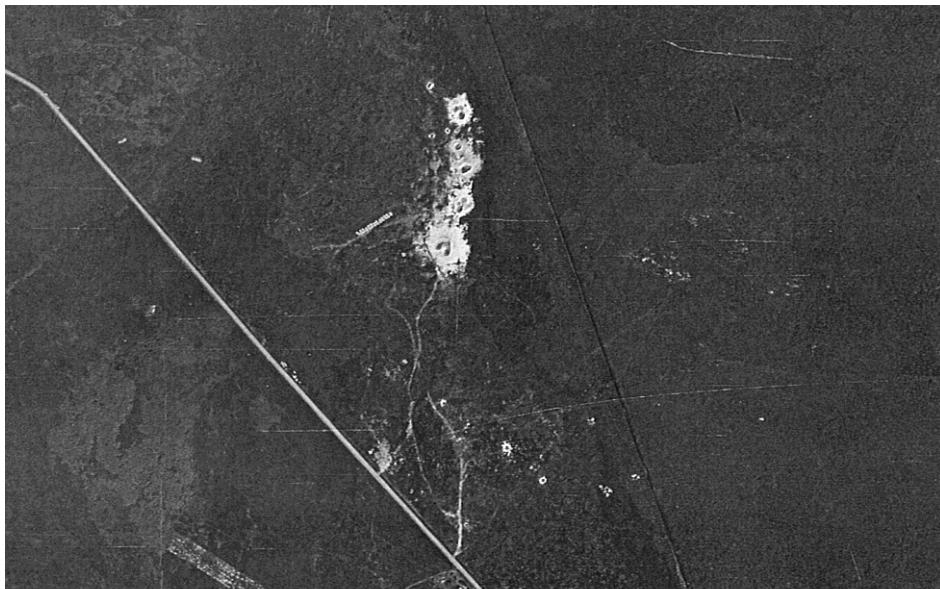
Information Data Sheet

Category Munitions Disposal Areas

Description Munitions disposal can take place almost anywhere and often goes unrecorded, particularly during wartime. Areas of open land were requisitioned to dispose of ordnance and burial pits were dug near defensive sites and airfields when munitions were no longer required. Military land, marshland, beaches or sand dunes were frequently used for this purpose.

All explosives and munitions manufacturing sites have associated disposal areas for defective or unwanted munitions. This often takes the form of a burning pit/ground in a remote part of the site.

During wartime, munitions disposal became a more formalised process, particularly as mass production of munitions led to many defects. The number of unexploded bombs dropped by German aircraft also had to be dealt with in a timely fashion. As such, official bomb cemeteries were established in towns and cities subjected to frequent bombing raids. Parkland in London, Bristol and Coventry, for instance, was formerly set aside for the disposal of UXBs.



WWII munitions disposal area

Hazard Munitions disposal operations provide several potential hazards. Disposal by burial means that live ordnance may remain buried in the ground with the same potential impact it was supposed to have during its initial use.

Areas where munitions were disposed of by burning or controlled explosion may give rise to explosives residue and shrapnel. Waste tips containing explosives residue may also be present in these locations, particularly through accumulation if the site has a long operational history.

Burning grounds are routinely used for the destruction of explosive wastes, explosive devices and explosive contaminated materials and equipment. Various hydrocarbon fuels may have been stored or used on burning grounds.

Residual explosive contamination (including explosive fragments) is generally present in soils around burning grounds. In addition, a range of other contamination including heavy metals and fuel is often present. Ash from burning operations may still contain explosive residues of up to 5%.