Douglas Park Bombing Range

Unexploded Ordnance Assessment

Bradcorp Holdings Pty Ltd
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<td>For Issue</td>
<td>G Rowland</td>
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G Rowland [Signature]
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Executive Summary

OPEC Pty Ltd was requested to review and report upon the potential for unexploded ordnance remnant from the former Douglas Park Bombing Range and its impact, if any, on the Wilton Junction and Wilton North West development. OPEC has reviewed and checked components of the G-tek 08001SMTO – B Unexploded Ordnance Assessment Bingarra Gorge/Wilton Parklands, NSW v1.2 – 18 April 2008 assessment which covers the exact detail of the Douglas Park Bombing Range.

As a result of this assessment, it has been found that:

- The position indicated on the Department of Defence UXO website incorrectly places the former Douglas Park Bombing Range slightly too far to the south and not far enough to the east; relocation and accurate sizing of the actual site, however would not change the outcome.
- Records indicate that the former Douglas Park Bombing Range, while developed, was never used as a target or impact area for air delivered munitions.

From these findings it is considered that there is no potential for remnant unexploded ordnance contamination from the former Douglas Park Bombing Range within the Wilton Junction and Wilton North West development.
1.0 Introduction

OPEC Systems has been contracted to conduct an unexploded ordnance (UXO) assessment on an area of land south of the South Western Freeway (Hume Highway) at Wilton, NSW (the site). This site has been incorporated into the Wilton Junction and Wilton North West development and has the future potential for a variety of uses. This study was initiated due to the requirements of the site auditor “Versa Pty Ltd” that the site be assessed by a company experienced in UXO assessments as the site is listed by the Department of Defence as having a slight potential for containing remnant UXO.

OPEC reviewed the G-TEK 18 April 2008 Unexploded Ordnance Assessment, Bingara Gorge / Wilton Parklands, NSW v1.2 in the preparation of this report.

Figure 1: Defence UXO listing for the site (http://www.defence.gov.au/UXO/WhereIs.asp)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explosive Ordnance (EO)</td>
<td>All munitions containing explosives, nuclear fission or fusion materials and biological and chemical agents. This includes bombs and warheads, guided and ballistic missiles; artillery, mortar, rocket and small arms ammunition, all mines, torpedoes and depth charges; pyrotechnics; clusters and dispensers; cartridge and propellant actuated devices; electro-explosive devices; clandestine and improvised explosive devices; and all similar or related items or components explosive in nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)</td>
<td>The detection, identification, evaluation, render safe and recovery and disposal of EO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Explosive Ordnance Waste (EOW) | Non explosive components of munitions that can enter the waste stream without having to undergo “free from explosives” certification.
---|---
Free from Explosives (FFE) | The process of certifying munitions, arising’s, packaging and salvage as being free from explosive material.
Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) | EO that has been primed, fused, armed or otherwise prepared for use or used. It may have been fired, dropped, launched or projected yet remains unexploded either through malfunction or design or for any other reason.

### 3.0 Douglas Park Bombing Range

#### 3.1 Range Development

Douglas Park Bombing Range was developed by clearing a central target area of trees and grubbing out the roots. The cut timber was used for fence posts and a five strand wire fence was placed around the primary target area. Additional timber was also cut to allow direct line of sight from two quadrant (observation) shelters positioned north and west of the range on the northern side of the Nepean River.¹

Figure 2: Property at Douglas Park, DWG 43/44/1020²

The central target area consisted of an 1,800ft (549m) diameter circle inside a (generally) 2,640ft (805m) fenced square, extended at the south by 661ft (201.5m) to accommodate an Emergency landing Ground (ELG) and

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¹ NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 dated 23-12-43
² NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 dated 23-12-43
diverted at the east around a large tank (dam). A beacon was developed in the centre as an aiming mark for pilots and some targets may also have been developed. Modern beacons are generally painted timber pyramids, but the Douglas Park beacon may have been marked out on the ground.  

A primary contractor for the construction of the Douglas Park Bombing Range was Colin Arnold and Co Pty Ltd of 40 O’Connell Street, Sydney.  

Figure 3: Central Fenced Target Area

ELG were generally developed at training ranges so that any aircraft experiencing difficulties during training at that range that could not return to an airfield were able to safely land. It would appear that two ELG were developed at Douglas Park, the ELG north of the main target area nearer the Nepean River, but within the declared range area is the more typical ELG, and having another inside the primary target area is unusual.

The two quadrant shelters for Douglas Park were developed on areas of higher ground overlooking the primary target area, and each consisted of a 6ft x 6ft (1.8m x 1.8m) timber and corrugated iron building with fibro lining and glass sashes on three sides of the walls and a tongue and groove timber floor, built on 5ft (1.5m) posts. Each shelter location also included a 600 gallon (2,724L) water tank, an adjacent portable corrugated iron latrine and markers indicating the direction to the primary target.

Costs for the construction of the Douglas Park Bombing Range included:

- Clear target area 300 yards radius: £66.18.1
- Clear Radial Strips: £1,041.4.0
- Preparation of Targets and Target Ground: £95.0.0
- Clearing, Grubbing and Grading: £254.0.0
- Lopping and clearing approaches to Landing Strip: £70.0.0

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3 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Map, Divisional Works Office Sydney, 7-5-45.
4 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter dated 13-2-45
5 G-tek 080015MT0 – B Unexploded Ordnance Assessment Bingarra Gorge/Wilton Parklands, NSW v1.2 – 18 April 2008
6 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Map, Divisional Works Office Sydney, 7-5-45.
7 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Memo Divisional Works Officer DWO 308/6/W dated 01-11-45.
96 Chains of fencing – target area and target ground @ 30/- £144.0.0
24 Chains of fencing additional to Emergency Landing Strip @ 30/- £36.0.0
Erection of Timber framed Quadrant Shelters and Signals etc. £442.18.2

The construction of the ELG was a separate cost item at £500.0.0. 8

In addition to the Bombing Range and ELG, the same costing Memo also includes with the Douglas Park Bombing Range Costings, provisions for the construction of Stop Butts, a 25 yard range Firing Shelter and Target Store (£763.11.20) indicating that a small arms firing range was also constructed somewhere within the Douglas Park area, probably for training of/by RAAF personnel. No other reference to this small arms firing range has been located.

One target not indicated within the plans was apparently a ship of unknown size "constructed of galvanised iron on a timber framework supported by wire struts". The presence of such a target would indicate that the Douglas Park Bombing range was probably intended to be used to train the pilots of dive-bomber or similar aircraft rather than medium to heavy bomber pilots, and the lack of a formed air to ground gunnery range (a line of posts with targets suspended between them), would also mitigate against fighter gun attack training.

The assets listed for disposal at the end of WWII included only the items included at the Quadrant Shelter locations, and not any of the material within the range target area; it was decided that “The remaining assets are considered to have no recoverable value and the costs of removal should be settled by payment of physical damages”. 11

As part of the Range revocation process, Headquarters Eastern Area RAAF requested that a “thorough search of the danger area” be conducted under the supervision of appropriately qualified personnel, to remove any unexploded ammunition; it is considered that this is a standard form letter raised against all Range closures and does not imply range usage. 12

3.2 Douglas Park Lands

Land for Douglas Park Bombing and Gunnery Range was requisitioned by the RAAF on 03 February 1943 (RAAF Hiring No 3545) and an Order under Regulation 55 of the National Security (General) Regulations (E.C (RAAFH) 4166) was issued on 13 January 1944. 14

This Order indicated (in part):

- (Order 2) “All persons using the land shall be entitled to do any acts and carry out any works for any purpose connected with the defence of the Commonwealth” and
- (Order 4) “During the continuance of this Order no person shall exercise any right of way over said land or any other right in relation thereto, whether by virtue of an interest in that land or otherwise save an except with the consent of the Chief of Air Staff, and in particular the presence of human beings on the said land is prohibited whilst bombing practice is in progress”.

The schedule to the order incorporated parts of the properties shown in Table 1

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8 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Memo Divisional Works Officer DWO 308/6/W dated 01-11-45.
9 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Minute J F Le Fevre 18-9-44
10 G-take 08001SMTO – B Unexploded Ordnance Assessment Bingarra Gorge/Wilton Parklands, NSW v1.2 – 18 April 2008
11 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter Divisional Works Officer DWO 308/6/W dated 18-12-45
12 G-take 08001SMTO – B Unexploded Ordnance Assessment Bingarra Gorge/Wilton Parklands, NSW v1.2 – 18 April 2008
13 NAA file 171/11/625 Letter to No 2 training Group RAAF dated 20-11-45
14 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 AA Form P119 dated 13-1-44
Table 2: Property Indicated as included within Douglas Park Bombing Range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1944 Property Description</th>
<th>Then Owner</th>
<th>Torrens Property Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portion 1 Parish of Wilton</td>
<td>John Allen Taylor</td>
<td>Lot 11 DP702024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion 2 Parish of Wilton</td>
<td>John Joseph, Patrick Paul and Daniel James Cleary, and The Corporation of the Society of Missionaries of the Sacred Heart</td>
<td>Lot 1DP250359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion 15 Parish of Wilton</td>
<td>John Allen Taylor</td>
<td>Lot 2 DP702024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion 35 Parish of Wilton</td>
<td>Alfred Tyson Wonson</td>
<td>Lot 5 DP702024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion 15 Parish of Picton</td>
<td>Estate Late Ernest Albert Sheil</td>
<td>Lot 11 DP1013745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion 8 Parish of Camden</td>
<td>Estate Maurice Augustine Sheil Estate Ellen Maher Estate Francis James Sheil</td>
<td>Lot 3 DP225273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion 9 Parish of Camden</td>
<td>Estate Maurice Augustine Sheil Estate Ellen Maher Estate Francis James Sheil</td>
<td>Lot 9 DP747563</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual land owners were advised of the Orders impacting on their properties by letter, and were given the details that they would be needed to provide if they wished to make any claim for “periodical compensation.”

3.3 Community Reaction

Community reaction to the notification of the establishment of the Douglas Park Bombing Range was immediate and generally negative. Letters were sent to Senator SK Armour by Mr Tom Fitzpatrick (President Cabra-Vale ALP) and Mr F Sedgwick (Secretary Campbelltown District War Agricultural Committee) on behalf of several of the landowners; these letters were forwarded by Senator Armour to the then Minister for the Army (the Hon F M Forde MP). The primary concern was the impact the bombing would have on the production of milk in the general area.

On 24 February 1944 the Minister replied to Senator Armour, and initiated an urgent Ministerial Inquiry through Assistant Director of Hiring’s.

3.4 Hiring Inquiries and Activities

Internal notations within the Hiring’s organisation from March 1944 appear to be trying to determine where the actual approval for the Douglas park Bombing Range may have been given, and which Departments had or had not been involved in the process of developing the range. Various notations indicate that the Department of Air believed the proposal may not be proceeded with, that Eastern Area Headquarters may recommend that the proposal be abandoned. In May 1944, the Directorate of Hiring was notified by the Divisional Works Board that “although it is not intended to proceed with the construction work on the range, it is desired to retain the area for future practice purposes,” and in June 1944 by the Divisional Works Officer that “although it is not required for

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15 NAA file Letter Shire of Wollondilly 1488/71 to A.D. Hiring’s (Army) dated 18-2-44
16 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letters H22/4166 dated 14-2-44
17 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter dated 23-2-44
18 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter dated 24-2-44
19 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Minute 3T114 P/N 3545 dated 4-5-44
immediate use, it is considered advisable to retain it for future use, mainly because it is the only area in the vicinity of Sydney for the purpose”.

On 7 August 1944, the Minister for the Army further replied to Senator Armour’s February query and informed him that “the retention of the subject Bombing Range has been re-considered in view of the changed RAAF requirements, and it has been decided that the land may be resumed by the owner, subject to certain conditions and also to the protection of Commonwealth property, in conformity with the provisions of National Security (General) Regulations. This decision will automatically cancel the restrictions referred to and obviate any possible deleterious effect upon the production of milk, which your correspondents feared would result from the bombing practice”.

No record of the actual authorisation or contracts for clearing or construction of the range have been located to date, but by 13 September 1944, an inspection of the range by Captain Lambert, Flight Lieutenant Le Fevre and Flight Lieutenant Bird from the Directorate of Hiring’s, in company with Mr J A Taylor, the landowner, indicates that the land had been cleared and fenced and targets constructed. The intent of the inspection was to determine “what work would be necessary to enable the target area to be handed back to the owner”.

From September to December 1944, discussions continued between the Directorate of Hiring’s and the owners in relation to compensation, but on 19 January 1945, the Air Board indicated to Hiring’s that de-hiring was to cease as the Douglas Park Range was urgently required by the Naval Air Arm. Hiring’s were aware of the Minister for Army’s August response to Senator Armour and anticipated a similar reaction from the community if the Navy planned to use the range instead of the RAAF.

File annotations indicate that Hiring’s was advised on 12 February that the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm would commence bombing on the Douglas Park Range on 16 February 1945, and, as a result, individual landowners were again advised of the Orders impacting their properties by letter; Mr Taylor was advised that “no steps should be taken by you at present to dispose of stock. All stock must however be removed from the fenced target area prior to 16 February” and that “the presence of human beings within the target area is prohibited whilst bombing practice is in progress.”

By 14 March 1945 no use had been made of the range, and Mr Taylor was pressing Hiring’s for more definite information as he wished to move cattle back into the fenced (160acre- 64.75Ha) primary target area.

On 20 April 1945 Mr Taylor was advised that he may use the area for grazing, and that he would be given one weeks’ notice prior to any bombing being conducted. The first such notification was given to Mr Taylor by Telegram indicating that the bombing practice would occur “from ninth to fifteenth May inclusive.” By July, an alternative range at Londonderry was being sought, and the Douglas park Range had still not been used; Mr Taylor had been notified that he could have unrestricted access to the range until it was required.

In October 1945 Hiring’s was informed by No 1 Divisional Works office that the Royal Navy’s requirements for the use of Douglas Park Range had lapsed, and it was requested that the hiring be terminated.

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20 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Minute 1 DWO 308/6/W dated 21-6-44
21 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter Forde/Armour dated 7-82-44
22 G-tek 08001SMTO – B Unexploded Ordnance Assessment Bingarra Gorge/Wilton Parklands, NSW v1.2 – 18 April 2008
23 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Minute J F Le Fevre dated 18-9-44
24 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Telegram GR22 W 675
25 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter Hiring’s H22/TK/4166 dated 12-2-45
26 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Annotations/Letter
27 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter Hiring’s H18/VM/4166 dated 20-4-45
28 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Telegram Hiring’s Taylor 125012 undated
29 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter Hiring’s X16/DmcD/4166 dated 03-7-45
30 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter DWO 308/6/W dated 16-10-45
Documentation was issued on 27 October, 1945 to each of the effected landowners, that "occupation of the (indicated) premises under National Security (General) Regulations is no longer required by the Commonwealth and such premises will be vacated by it, and possessions thereof given or made available to you Monday the 39th October at 11o'clock in the forenoon".

Compensation to each of the individual landowners was determined on a case by case basis, based on occupation and impact. No owners claimed or were given any compensation on the basis of contamination of the site caused by the impact of explosive ordnance or the potential for remnant unexploded ordnance. Of all the landowners compensation was only paid to Mr J Taylor who received the sum of £283.19.0.

Disposal of the Assets of the Douglas Park Bombing Range (Quadrant Shelters, latrines, direction markers) by public auction was notified to the Assistant Director of Hiring's on 16 July 1945.

The revocation of the Douglas Park Bombing Range Orders was signed by the Governor General on 27 February 1946.

4.0 Conclusions

An area at Douglas Park was occupied by the Australian Military Forces from 13 January 1944 until at least 29 October 1945.

The area occupied by the Douglas Park Bombing Range does not coincide with the area indicated on the Department of Defence Unexploded Ordnance website, that site indicating the range too far to the south and not enough to the east and not showing contact within (current lots) 3 DP225273 and 9 DP747563.

Infrastructure was developed for the Douglas Park Bombing Range including a de vegetated, fenced primary target area, Emergency landing Grounds, Quadrant Shelters and direction indicators. While cost records indicate the construction of a 25yd small arms range, plans located to date do not indicate that it was actually developed within the Douglas Park Bombing Range.

The primary target area of the Douglas Park Bombing Range was located within Portion 1 Parish of Wilton (Lot 11 DP702024) the then property of Mr J A Taylor.

While a search of the area for unexploded ammunition was ordered as part of the Range closure, records reviewed indicate that no munitions, high explosive or practice were air delivered onto the Douglas Park Bombing Range.

Based on the information reviewed:

- It is considered that there is no potential for remnant air delivered munitions to be found in the Wilton Junction and Wilton North West development area.

32 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letters (Hiring’s) H3/JMcl/4366
33 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Values from AA forms P124
34 NAA file SP 16/4 Item 4166 Letter DWO 308/6/3345
35 G-tek 08001SMTO – B Unexploded Ordnance Assessment Bingarra Gorge/Wilton Parklands, NSW v1.2 – 18 April 2008
36 G-tek 08001SMTO – B Unexploded Ordnance Assessment Bingarra Gorge/Wilton Parklands, NSW v1.2 – 18 April 2008