



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Corps Facts

SUBJECT: Aging and Souvenir munitions

Background

UXO stands for unexploded ordnance. UXO result from our military's use of munitions during live-fire training or testing. UXO are considered the most dangerous category of military munitions. Although the conditions that define military munitions as UXO are specific, the public should consider any munitions or suspect munitions it encounters as UXO and as extremely dangerous. It is important to remember the three R's of munitions safety when you think you may have come across UXO — **Recognize, Retreat and Report**.

After decades of activities required to maintain our military's readiness, UXO and other military munitions may be present at many active and former military installations across the country. Although military munitions will most likely be found in areas that the Department of Defense currently uses or used in the past, they could be encountered anywhere.

When military munitions do not function as intended during use, they become UXO. Some people consider these "duds" and think they are safe to handle, but that can be a costly mistake to make. Treat all UXO as live and never handle it.



Even very small UXO can be extremely dangerous and should be treated with caution. If you see UXO get away from it and report it to local law enforcement officials.

Key Points

- Remember no matter how old or damaged UXO may look, it can still be just as dangerous, if not more dangerous, than the day it was made. Some UXO have been found dating back to the civil war.
- UXO can be hard to notice now, but they become especially hard to see when they have had years to settle into place. This ultimately makes UXO more dangerous as time goes on. Make sure to be aware of possible UXO in places like deep grass, heavy foliage or thick brush.
- Regardless of how long munitions may have been kept or remained in the same place they retain their explosive power and remain dangerous.



UXO can be hard to notice, especially when it has had years to settle into place.

The Three R's of Munitions Safety



Recognize – There is no one way to describe UXO. UXO can come in many shapes and sizes. It can be rusty or look like new. It can be out in the open, hidden in bushes or partially buried. The important thing to remember is that if you see what you think is UXO then you should retreat from the area and report it to authorities.

Retreat – Make sure to never touch UXO, as they can be extremely dangerous. If you see UXO, immediately leave the area and do not disturb the item.

Report – If you come across what you think might be UXO, you should leave it be and report it to your local law enforcement by calling 911. They will be able to take care of the item. Do not use your cell phone near the item. Call 911 after retreating from the UXO.

Souvenir Munitions

Military munitions are designed for use in warfare and should never be kept as a souvenir. Regardless of size, type, age, or condition, all military munitions should be considered extremely dangerous. Even Civil War cannon balls can be deadly. In most cases, only specially trained personnel, such as EOD or bomb squad personnel, can determine the dangers associated with military munitions.

Military munitions are most likely present in areas such as training ranges on active or former military installations, but they can be encountered anywhere. Even inside a home as a war souvenir. Regardless of how long they may have been kept, war souvenirs or trophies retain their explosive power and remain dangerous, especially when falsely believed to be safe because they have been handled for years.

If you or your family has a munition that was kept as a war souvenir, even one that has been kept for years, call 911 or local law enforcement to report it. They will arrange for support from DoD Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) or police bomb squad personnel to retrieve the munitions and destroy them safely.

For More Information

For more information contact the Louisville District Public Affairs Office at (502) 315-6773 or visit the Formerly Used Defense Sites Program Web site at: https://ekopowered.usace.army.mil/ecop/what_we_do/fuds/.