

Ramora UK removes WWII mine from BAE Systems site on Isle of Wight

Press Release – 22 May 2012

Ramora UK, a leading global provider of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) services, has successfully removed one of two mines that had been buried for some 60 years underground that now forms part of the BAE Systems site at Cowes on the Isle of Wight.

The site was previously occupied by RAF Somerton during WWII and it is believed that the mines - known as pipemines - were laid in order that the airfield could be rendered unusable in the event of an enemy invasion. Most of them were removed when the airfield was decommissioned but the two mines that remained appear to have been missed at the time.

Their existence came to light when BAE Systems undertook geophysical surveys on the land, close to the Somerton Roundabout, as part of an exercise required to enable the company to sell off the land for commercial use, including a new supermarket.

The first mine, which was located close to the island's main gas pipe, was detonated safely during the early hours of Sunday 20th May. However, during excavations to deal with the second mine, it was discovered that it was approximately two metres larger than expected and that it bowed significantly in the middle. As a result, it was decided that further ground works would be required in order to remove it safely.

Ramora UK and BAE Systems worked in close consultation with the Hampshire Constabulary and the Isle of Wight Council to ensure that all necessary safety measures were in place, including a 200 metre radius cordon which was manned by the police throughout the removal process. No residential properties came within the limits of the cordon and those businesses that might potentially have been affected by the road closures were all given at least four weeks' notice of the operation. The local media were also kept informed.

The size of the exclusion zone was calculated on the assumption that the pipemines would be loaded with fully functioning polar blasting gelignite.

The work was undertaken by highly trained Ramora UK staff, including former military personnel, using a proven bomb disposal methodology. Prior to the planned detonations, extensive tests were carried out but it was not until the cordon was in place that it became possible to determine the exact size and condition of the mines. In the interests of safety and to minimise the risk of any possible damage to the surrounding infrastructure, the decision was taken to carry out further scoping works before disposing of the second mine.

“We’re delighted with the progress of this operation so far and we look forward to a safe and timely completion of the remaining phase” commented David Welch MIEpE, Managing Director of Ramora UK. “The outcome of the first detonation showed how a complicated operation, previously only undertaken by UK military teams, can be successfully executed with appropriate planning and preparation. By working closely with our client, BAE Systems, the police and the local council, we believe we are helping to establish best practice procedure for the future involvement of expert commercial operators in all forms of bomb disposal.”

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Notes to Editors:

About Ramora UK

www.ramorauk.com

- Ramora UK is the trading name for Ramora Global Limited.
- Ramora UK is a leading global provider of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) services and training.
- Ramora UK offers a wide range of land and maritime Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and EOD services including the design and delivery of professional training, practical services, equipment procurement, equipment solutions, integration services and consultancy solutions.
- Governments, corporations and military and law enforcement agencies around the world rely on Ramora UK’s expert services for planning, training and the practical removal of Unexploded Ordnance.