

# Property Owners Struggling With Damage From UXO Response

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**Exeter, United Kingdom** in a follow up to an article we posted back in February regarding the controlled detonation of a 1,000 kg German WWII era bomb discovered during construction on a private lot west of the University of Exeter, property owners are reportedly still dealing with the aftermath including damage to houses and vehicles.

Approximately 2,600 properties were evacuated, including 1,400 students from university as an UK Army EOD team conducted a disposal operation on the bomb that was deemed too hazardous to move. Despite hundreds of tons of sand and a special structure being built to contain the blast, many buildings nearby were badly damaged as shrapnel was sent flying into nearby homes. Many residents and buildings on the university sustained damage including some buildings with major structural damage.

Residents frustrated over the damage including who was responsible for covering the costs turned to Mr. Ben Bradshaw, a member of parliament (MP) who represents the people of Exeter. Specifically, the property owners were trying to sort out conflicting information on whether liability for damage was the responsibility of the property developer, the Defence Department, the Home Office\*, or individual insurance companies.

Mr. Bradshaw began his inquiries by writing letters to the Secretary of State for Defence and the Home Secretary. The letters stated in part, "The Secretary of State for Defence initially told me that he believed liabilities from the incident might fall to the developer of the site. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) briefing that I have been sent states that 'liability for damage caused by EOD intervention typically falls to the Home Office'. However, residents whose properties and vehicles have been damaged have been instructed to approach their insurance companies." The letter went on to state, "It has emerged that some residents have been told by their insurers to contact the Home Office instead."

Mr. Bradshaw reported to his constituents of Exeter that he has requested the Government to provide an urgent clarification of where liability for the cost of the damage lies. He also told his constituents that he requested the Government to provide a fund to cover residents' costs where home or vehicle insurers refuse to pay, where householders are uninsured or underinsured, or where costs fall below the insurance excess. The request also included consideration that this fund cover reasonable claims for compensation by residents directly affected."

Mr Bradshaw has also reportedly requested to see the post-incident report and for the Defence Department to hold a public meeting. However, his requests have so far been denied.



The images above shows the bomb as well as the blast for the EOD operation. Although speculation, the image appears that the bomb experienced a high-order detonation suggesting that either a render safe operation was not conducted or that it was attempted but failed.

\*The Home Office (HO) is a ministerial department of the Government of the United Kingdom, responsible for immigration, security, and law and order.