

UXO Clean up of "Holy" Proportions

Posted At : September 13, 2013 8:24 AM | Posted By : Admin

Related Categories: UXO Cleanup

Castel Gandolfo, Italy The pope's summer residence along with 400 residents of a Rome suburb were evacuated this week as two massive WWII bombs were detonated. The 17th century papal palace at the village of Castel Gandolfo, 15 miles south of central Rome, was closed as nearby residents evacuated in preparation for the detonations of 100 and 130-pound bombs which were discovered on the shores of Lake Albano.

The old WWII bombs and some 4,000 other ammunition items, remnants of the Allied invasion of Italy, were exposed in the lake basin as a result of low water levels. Among the other munition items were some 2,300 hand grenades, 300 mortar bombs and hundreds of bullets.

The clean up was deemed necessary as thousands of visitors flock every year, not only to the papal residence, but also to the scenic volcanic crater lake itself. The ordnance was found immediately adjacent to the areas frequented by tourists and just a short walk from the pope's residence.

Air, rail and ocean traffic in the area were suspended, and people living within 1,600 feet of the blast site were forced to leave before the operation by the Italian army's bomb squad. The operation, carried out by hundreds of soldiers with the help of local fire brigades, police, forest rangers, civil defense volunteers and the Red Cross, was conducted in two phases. In the first, the bomb technicians carefully dislodged the bombs. In a second phase, they were transported to a quarry in the village of Ciampino, where they were detonated.

No injuries were reported in the massive effort to render the area safe once more for Pope Francis and tourists alike.