

# Operation Render Safe Underway To Clear UXO From WWII

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**Rabaul, Papua New Guinea** Over 150 military EOD and explosives experts from the Australian Defence Force, New Zealand Defence Force, and Papua New Guinea Defence Force are participating in "Operation Render Safe". The focus of the project is to clear UXO and explosive debris from the surface and shoreline of Rabaul Island, a former major WWII era Japanese Naval Base. Although the Japanese Base was never captured by the Allies, it was heavily bombed during the war. A large percentage of the bombs dropped reportedly did not explode.

The UXO clearance operation was planned after a detailed report presented at the 42nd Pacific Forum summit held in September outlined the dangers and explosives safety risks posed by UXO in the area. New Zealand dispatched two naval ships, HMNZ Resolution and Wellington, to Papua New Guinea Island to support operations.

Rabaul, which relies heavily on international tourism, is reportedly littered with UXO. In recent years, local police have seen a rise in the number of incidents involving UXO as more scrap collectors are seeking to cash in on the rising prices of recycled metals. Reportedly, local police have conducted limited UXO removals on an as-needed basis over the years and reportedly have close to 2,500 UXO items in storage awaiting disposal. Operation Render Safe will destroy these UXO and also clear UXO from the Kokoda Track, across the mountains of Papua New Guinea, north of Port Moresby. Operation Render Safe began on 18 October and is scheduled to run through 04 November.