

Man Works on UXO With Butter Knife

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Seaside Park, New Jersey a 33-year-old man combing the riverfront of the South Toms River with a metal detector uncovered a cannonball buried two feet in the sand. Curious, the man decided to take the item home to research it further. He placed the cannonball in a bucket of water in the back of his truck and drove it to his house. At the house he proceeded to scrape the rust off the item with a butter knife. Reportedly he came upon a circular opening where rope like matter was stuffed in the iron ball. He then began to smell gunpowder and suddenly became concerned.

Upon researching the Internet the man decided to contact a Navy EOD unit in California for assistance. The Navy EOD unit instructed him to leave the item in the water and to not touch or handle the item any further. The California EOD unit then called the Navy EOD unit based out of Earle Naval Weapons Station in Colts Neck, New Jersey to respond with local police.

The police arrived and evacuated the two-story apartment building where the man lived and blocked off a nearby street. The man told authorities that he wanted to donate the item to a museum but his request was wisely denied by the police and the EOD unit. The EOD unit took custody of the cannonball from the man and properly disposed of the item without incident.

A local historian dates the cannonball back to late 1700s when the British staged two attacks on the Toms River. The 1778 attack was unsuccessful but the 1782 attack was successful. Of course the possibility exists that the item may have been discarded overboard by a ship.

The man is fortunate to be alive considering the cannonball was filled with nearly a pound of black powder. UXO should only be handled and transported by trained UXO or EOD technicians.