

Open Detonation of UXO Causes Major Brush Fire

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Vandenberg Air force Base, California a 1950s era UXO (type not reported) was discovered on the base which was determined by EOD to be too hazardous to move due to its age and condition. The only option at hand was to deal with the UXO in place therefore, it was decided that a Blow In Place or BIP open detonation operation would be performed on the UXO.

To conduct a BIP operation, an EOD or UXO technician places an explosive donor charge near or on the UXO item to be disposed. When the donor charge is initiated, it sets off the UXO thus destroying it in the process. The BIP operation however destroyed more than just the intended UXO when it sparked off a brush fire that escalated and burned over 45 acres of land in the process.

It took over 150 firefighters, ten fire trucks, two water trucks and several dozers to control and extinguish the fire. No structures or people were endangered but some evacuations were ordered as a precaution.