

IT'S NO SECRET THAT LIVE MINES AND UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE THREATEN THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS AROUND THE WORLD. BUT UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE OR U-X-O MAY ALSO THREATEN PEOPLE WHO LIVE AND WORK ON FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES. THE US ARMY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER IS SPEARHEADING AN EFFORT TO CLEAR U-X-O FROM THESE LOCATIONS. ENVIRONMENTAL CORRESPONDENT JAVIER HERNANDEZ REPORTS A UNIQUE TEST SITE IS HELPING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IMPROVE HOW IT DETECTS THIS DANGEROUS MATERIAL.

THESE WORKERS ARE SEARCHING FOR U-X-O OR UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE –BOMBS THAT DIDN'T EXPLODE DURING TESTING OR TRAINING.

MORE THAN 760 FORMERLY USED DEFENSE SITES AND MOST MILITARY INSTALLATIONS HAVE UXO CONTAMINATION, SOME DATE BACK TO THE CIVIL WAR. THE ARMY IS HEADING A NATION WIDE CLEAN UP. AND THIS SITE AT ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, MARYLAND MAY PLAY A KEY ROLE IN DECIDING HOW THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GOES ABOUT IT. IT'S CALLED THE ARMY STANDARDIZED UXO TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION SITES PROGRAM.

“BASICALLY IT GIVES THEM A STANDARDIZED SET OF TARGETS IN THE GROUND. WE KNOW WHERE THE STUFF IS, THEY TELL US WHERE IT IS, AND FROM THERE WE CAN DO ANY KIND OF COMPARISON THAT WE

NEED TO SCORE THEIR PERFORMANCE.” - LARRY OVERBAY –

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND PROJECT MANAGER

THE PROGRAM EVALUATES THE DETECTION SYSTEMS UNDER VARIOUS CONTROLLED CONDITIONS. EVERY PIECE OF DATA CAREFULLY RECORDED, EVEN BREAK DOWNS.

“THIS IS WHAT WE WANNA KNOW – WHEN WILL THESE THINGS BREAK DOWN — THAT WAY WE CAN MAKE THEM BETTER.” JOHN MORGAN - ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

AND NOT JUST THEIR DESIGNS. THE ARMY WOULD LIKE SYSTEMS THAT CANNOT ONLY FIND BUT TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A ROUND OF AMMO AND SOMEONE’S LOST WRIST WATCH. ARMY OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THAT CLEANUP CREWS EXCAVATE HARMLESS WASTE UP TO 97 PERCENT OF THE TIME.

AND BECAUSE ARMY OFFICIALS WORKED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCIES, STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATORS AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP THE PROGRAM, THESE SYSTEMS MAYBE USED BOTH ON POST AND ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

“EVENTUALLY THESE TECHNOLOGIES WILL BE TRANSITIONED OUT TO BOTH THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR CLEARING AND REMEDIATION OF UXO SITES AND ALSO OUT TO THE WAR FIGHTER TO SUPPORT HIS EFFORTS.” - GEORGE ROBITAILLE – SUTDS PROGRAM MANAGER

THE PROGRAM IS NEW, SO ARMY OFFICIALS EXPECT SOME LEVEL OF EVOLUTION. BUT THEY SAY STANDARDIZED EVALUATIONS --A COMMON

MEASURING STICK -- ARE A GREAT LEAP FORWARD IN ARMY'S UXO
CLEANUP EFFORT, JAVIER HERNANDEZ, ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND,
MD.