



BRISTOL

Understanding Unexploded
Ordnance (UXO) Risk in
Bristol: Bombing History and
Remaining Threats



0371 789 1000
hello@igne.com
www.igne.com
Contact us today

Igne HQ:
Overross House, Ross Park,
Ross-on-Wye.
Herefordshire. HR9 7US

Unit 3, The Courtyard
Campus Way, Gillingham
Business Park
Gillingham, Kent. ME8 0NZ

WWII Bombing of Bristol



Bristol was singled out for attack due to the high density of factories manufacturing a variety of products for the Allied war effort.

Bristol made a vital contribution to the war effort and was of two-fold importance.

Firstly, it was situated on the west side of England where ports such as Bristol and Avonmouth played a crucial role in the Battle of the Atlantic. Secondly, during the twentieth century Bristol had developed as an engineering centre, including aircraft production at neighbouring Filton.

As Britain's sixth largest provincial city, Bristol was the largest urban centre in the south-west of England. Bristol was singled out by the Luftwaffe (German air force) for attack due to the high density of factories manufacturing a variety of products for the Allied war effort.

These included aircraft engines, vehicles, vehicle engines and armaments.

As the city had such a strategic importance it was inevitably the focus for many enemy air raids and became the fourth heaviest bombed city in Britain. The industrial centre of the city was earmarked extensively for potential targets.

The first heavy attack on Bristol began on 25th September 1940, with considerable damage and 131 fatalities inflicted during the raid on the Bristol Aeroplane Company's works at Filton.

Several further raids occurred throughout the war, with at least 6 major raids occurring between 24th November 1940 and 11th April 1941, inflicting heavy damage to the city and its surrounding area.

A total of approximately 6,203 bombs dropped over the County Borough of Bristol during WWII, of various types.

Key Facts:

- A common bomb type dropped was a canister containing numerous incendiaries (locally known as Goering's Bread Basket).
- 1,299 people were killed and 1,303 seriously injured.
- By the end of the main air raids, Bristol had suffered from at least 6,203 bomb strikes.

Military activity in WWII Bristol:

- Being an important centre of industry, Bristol was home to several features that led to contamination from British ordnance.
- Bristol was protected by numerous heavy anti-aircraft batteries, supported by mobile guns, all frequently in action against the Luftwaffe.
- Home Guard units (there were at least 8 of them) were stationed across the city, manning defences, patrolling and training for a potential invasion.
- In the build up to D-Day, US Army forces were stationed in various locations across Bristol including the large Bedminster Camp.

Impact of legacy UXO



Sample of Finds:

- 04/24: A grenade was discovered in the Fishponds District of Bristol.
- 09/22: A cache of 8 x grenades and 3 x expended rounds of ammunition were discovered in Henleaze.
- 02/21: An UX mortar was found in Portbury Wharf Nature Reserve, between Avonmouth and Portishead.
- 08/19: WWII 'fire bomb' (likely an incendiary) found in a garden in Bristol.
- 10/18: Unexploded WWII ordnance found in Bristol city centre.
- 04/18: WWII unexploded Incendiary bomb found in a house garden at Pensford.
- 08/17: 2 x WWII bombs found in Bristol Channel near Hinkley Point.

Legacy

One of the legacies of this conflict is buried unexploded air-dropped bombs or anti-aircraft projectiles resulting from the failure of a proportion of the weapons to function as designed. It is commonly accepted that the failure rate of these munitions was approximately 10% and, depending on their shape, weight, velocity and ground conditions, many penetrated the ground and came to rest at depth.

Intensive efforts were made during and after the war to locate and render safe all UXO but, unsurprisingly, not all were found and dealt with. This is evidenced by the regular, on-going discoveries of UXO during construction-related intrusive ground works.

Managing UXO risks with Igne

UXO presents a serious hazard to construction projects, causing delays, safety risks, and financial loss. Igne provides expert UXO risk assessment, detection, and clearance, ensuring projects proceed safely and efficiently.

Protect your site today:

www.igne.com

hello@igne.com

0371 789 1000

