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24 September 2003

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**OUT OF HARMS WAY - JOINT FORCE EOD**

The teams from Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal are making Iraq a safer place for the Iraqis, post Saddam Hussein. They are steadily working their way through the huge stock piles of arms that the former regime had built up – finding them, clearing them and disposing of them.

It is a massive task. There are numerous stockpiles of unused ordnance in bunkers across Iraq, as well as ammunition that has been left to waste away from previous conflicts, especially the Iran-Iraq War. It is the job of Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal to destroy those left in Southern Iraq.

Joint Force EOD is among the 11,000 British forces currently on security and reconstruction duties in southern Iraq. It comprises members from 49 Squadron Royal Engineers and a contingent of 5131 Squadron Bomb Disposal from the Royal Air Force based at RAF Wittering. Some RAF personnel have also been supplied by RAF stations across the UK, such as Kinloss and Waddington. The force has also been supported by members from the Territorial Army, who have come from 101 Engineer Regiment based in London. There is also a small team of Norwegians working with the force.

These stock piles include artillery and tank shells, rocket propelled grenades, mortars and right down to small arms ammunition.

Looters have been raiding arms dumps to dismantle weapons in order to get copper rings which can then be melted down into ingots and sold in the black market. By doing this dangerous activity the looters have been putting themselves at extreme risk as the contents are highly unstable, as a result some have been injured and even lost their lives in this activity.

The Joint EOD Force is working hard to put these arms out of harms way, firstly, by securing the weapons and then destroying them ordnance. By ensuring the weapons destroyed, means they are out of harms way for potential looters or even children who can see them as play items resulting in horrendous injuries. They are also to make sure that these weapons cannot be used for terrorism against the Iraqi people and Coalition Forces.

As well as explosive ordnance disposal, the teams are also hard at work in destroying unexploded bombs and ammunition left over from the 1991 Gulf War and the more recent gulf campaign. Teams are also responsible for putting out of action improvised explosive devices.

Pictures show a Joint Force EOD team working at an arms dump near Basra where weapons are being painstakingly destroyed.

Flt Lt Jol Fall