



Ministry of Defence

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Ref. FOI 2022/09482

8 September 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 11 August 2022 requesting the following information:

"Would it be possible to get the information the MOD holds with regards to a parcel of land in Barton Stacey, Hampshire. The parcel/field is 50+ acres and borders Roberts Rd, East Rd, Bullington Lane and the Dever river. Basically, it is the large field to the north/east of SO21 3RZ. What I am after is what type, if any, of materials, equipment, structures etc. that has been buried in the field over the last 80 years by the MOD."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found enclosed at Annex A and B however, I can advise that some of the information in scope of your request falls entirely within the scope of the exemption provided for at Section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been redacted.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40(2) requires the Department to conduct a balancing exercise, this exercise involves balancing the rights and interests of individuals against the legitimate interests in disclosure, this is not the same as carrying out the public interest test associated with certain exemptions in FOIA. The balancing exercise is carried out in order to decide whether the absolute exemption in section 40(2) is engaged. In particular, there is no assumption of disclosure in the legitimate interests test, as there is with qualified exemptions. The outcome of the balancing exercise lay in withholding the third-party personal data identified in the attached information.

Under Section 16 of the FOIA (Advice and Assistance), you may find it helpful to know that, to date, the MOD have not procured any environmental reports or Land Quality Assessments on the land in question.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made in writing within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>

Yours sincerely

DIO Secretariat

ATTACHED TO DEED – Hants 331052

TUNNEL FOUND AT AREA 7 BARTON STACEY TRAINING AREA

The licensee [REDACTED] of the above land reported that a hole had appeared in the middle of his field – see photo 1. This is located at approx. SU 4438.4119

Exploratory excavation was carried out with a mini-digger and the surface removed and a hand-dug shaft running into the chalk appeared, approx 6 feet wide at a 70-60 degree angle – see photo 2. There was no sign in the vicinity of any of the spoil/chalk raised from the shaft. Further excavation revealed that the shaft had been back-filled with large tin drums and builders debris, which were now rusting away and so the ground was subsiding to fill the void – see photo 3 & 4 & 6.

Initially an amount of broken asbestos sheeting was in the debris, so naturally I didn't want to push it back down into the shaft if it was a well, because it could potentially contaminate the aquifers. I also of course had the concern that unknown items could have been buried in War-time that are 'undesirable' but which now can be better disposed of, or rendered harmless, etc. Another consideration was that given the hole was clearly hand dug it could be some sort of archaeological feature (ie. Flint Mine), or even a WW1 / 2 historical construction that would now be of interest and worth preserving (the DE Archaeological Officer was notified at this time- 5 June).

On 9 October 06 a JCB started to excavate the shaft deeper –see photo 6; and when that could reach no deeper a 360 tracked digger continued to its maximum reach. In order to determine that the shaft continued deeper into the ground; and to give an idea of scale I climbed down into the trench – see photo 7.

Finally, when the digger could go no deeper I climbed back into the shaft and dug out by hand the soil and debris blocking the shaft – see photo 8. The trench was now about 22 feet deep, and on clearing the entrance to the shaft I then poked a 8 ft pipe into the void and could see that the shaft continued on down into the ground for at least another 10 feet – see photo 9. It appeared that at this location the shaft widened out into a bigger area and a 'roof' to a chamber was evident. This void was stacked full of more metal drums and boxes.

The only way to continue the excavation to determine its depth, origin, contents, etc would now be by hand. I therefore sought advice from DE colleagues given all the variable parameters; plus additional cost would now be incurred, and at the current time there was little evidence that anything noxious was buried there. The main driving force to excavate further now appeared to be curiosity and historical interest.

On further discussion with DTE HQ, and then the local DTE HC Commander, it was determined that we should fill the hole with the debris excavated and import material to make up the deficit.

If in future the land is sold this hole will need to be declared and maybe excavated to ensure nothing untoward exists at the very bottom of the shaft.

[REDACTED]
Land Agent
DE Longmoor Camp

10/10/06



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3



4/











9



Inserted September 2022 - Approx. location of tunnel (based on Grid Reference provided at p.1).

