



Field Investigation for Munitions Propellant Grains Washed on Beaches, Ma`ili, Waianae, Oahu, Hawaii

The Department of Defense (DoD) is faced with the challenge of characterizing locations in U.S. coastal waters and removing underwater military munitions (UW/MM) determined to pose a risk to human health and the environment. The undertaking at Ma`ili Beach and surrounding areas are part of the overall effort for Ordnance Reef Disposed Military Munitions Site (HI-06), Waianae, Oahu which are intended to help DoD investigate into the feasibility of removing or otherwise remediating the military munitions and the development of effective safety measures for dealing with such military munitions.

Propellant grains (refer to picture on the right) have been washing ashore at Oahu's Ma`ili Beach. Potential hazards arise as eroded munitions propellant grains wash onto the beach from a presumed offshore site. The grains are composed of nitrocellulose probably dating from military use during the World War II period (circa 1940-1950's). The propellants were a component of munitions that were in this area during an undetermined period of time. The propellant grains do not pose an explosive risk. However, the primary safety risk is from ignition (burning) of the grains. There have been reports to local public safety and military personnel, as well as the media, that some people have collected the grains, locally known as "Hawaiian Jade." The Army will continue surveying Ma`ili Beach to attempt to determine the source of propellant grains and to identify periods of time when these grains would be more likely to wash ashore. The project area also includes the beach parks that are north and south of Ma`ili Beach Park.

Path Forward

As part of the overall effort related to Ordnance Reef Disposed Military Munitions Site (HI-06), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue the field investigation for munitions propellant grains washing on beaches in the Ma`ili and surrounding areas. This will include twice a month sweeps of Ma`ili, Kalaeokakao, Ma`ili, Miapalaoa, and Ulehawa Beach Parks.

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