



It Can Happen

The Vernon News April 9th 1973

Explosive device ends in tragedy

An expert demolition team from Canadian Forces Base Chilliwack is assisting RCMP here with investigation into the tragic deaths of two small Okanagan Landing area children and the minor wounding of two others.

Dwayne Robert Roland Williment, 9, was killed instantly in the explosion which occurred Sunday about 11 a.m. at Okanagan Terrace Trailer Court near Okanagan Landing and about three to four miles from Vernon.

Bradley Hanke, 7, died in Vernon Jubilee Hospital about two hours later. He had been rushed by ambulance to the hospital with a brother of the victim, Keith Williment, 8, Keith was treated and released.

Moyra Sieman, 4, of Okanagan Terrace Trailer Court, a rear passenger in her dad's station wagon, was injured in the shoulder by flying shrapnel, as the car was leaving the area where the children were playing.

Moyra was taken to hospital, treated and released.

The boys had found the explosive device Friday in the rolling hills at the rear of the mobile home court, police said, and one of the three banged the device on the Trailer Court pavement when it exploded. There were several other children nearby and a German Shepherd dog was wounded.

Unconfirmed reports say it probably was a mortar shell as the range had been used by the Canadian Army as a training area during the Second

Results unveiled soon to ranch questionnaire

Results of a Marathon Realty Ltd. questionnaire to determine public response to the future developmental possibilities of some 2,500 acres of the Coldstream Ranch should be made public within the next few weeks.

About 700 Vernon area residents viewed the realty firm's display last weekend at the Coldstream Elementary School gymnasium and Marathon official Don Murray told The News reaction to the questionnaire was somewhat mixed.

He said the use of the land could range all the way from leaving it as a natural open space to intense recreational and residential development.

The questionnaire broke the 2,500 acres down into five distinct sub areas including Cosens Bay and the twin bays, Rattlesnake Point and the ridge, coral benches, open range and the northern slopes.

World War but no live ammunition has been used for training since 1945.

By erosion, earth buried bombs work their way upwards when the frost leaves the ground.

Both Bradley Hanke and Dwayne Williment were killed in the explosion. (Continued on Page 12)

Regions probe harvester buy

The provincial government's offer to share in the cost of a

Some electoral areas, he said, are outside the main basin area

From Page 1

Explosive

students at Okanagan Landing School.

Unconfirmed reports say this makes at least seven deaths from exploding devices in the Commonage-Landing areas since the war.

In 1964, two young Scouts, Grant Morgan and Donald Hope, died on the Commonage while playing with an army mortar shell.

After this incident the military set up displays of similar types of shells and ammunition and made extensive educational tours of district schools.

While loading top soil onto a truck in the Commonage area in spring 1948, three Vernon residents were killed: Sam Kashuba, 18, and his two uncles, Mike Chudyk, 18, and Alex Chudyk, 13. Mike Kashuba, Sam's brother, was the only one to survive the bomb explosion incident say relatives.

Since then, army demolition squads have de-activated the area several times.

Meantime, Berkley (Berke) Shaw, who lives in Claremont Subdivision — adjacent to Okanagan Terrace Trailer Court, started a petition Sunday.

It reads: "We, as concerned parents and citizens of the Vernon area, would like to request all possible measures be taken to prevent a recurrence of tragic accident such as happened April 8, and we would like the national defence department to scour the area with suitable electronic devices and want any particularly dangerous areas sealed off to the public. We further would like to see an educational program presented throughout district schools."

Mr. Murray reiterated that the display last weekend was really a form of public participation in a land planning exercise and not a series of alternative development proposals by the realty firm.

"We have a rough idea now of what we can and cannot do and I personally hope we can get enough positive response to proceed further," said Mr. Murray.

"We certainly plan to keep the public informed of any future plans and they will be given more than their chance to express opinions."



Scene Of Bomb Explosion

Two Boy Scouts of the 5th Vernon Troop were killed and a third injured when a mortar bomb exploded on the property of John Rose on the Commonage. After the accident Saturday army engineers hastily erected signs in the area, warning of the danger. The three boys were walking through the gulley to the left of the sign when they discovered the mortar bomb, which had been left there by the army 20 years ago.

The Vernon News
March 18, 1963

Un accident est toujours possible

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62e année, No 180 Trois-Rivières, samedi 26 juin 1982 lun. au ven. 40¢, sam. 50¢

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Obus dans un feu de joie à Nicolet: Un mort, neuf blessés

Un des nombreux fragments de l'obus a été retrouvé à quelques mètres de l'explosion. Cet engin explosif, propriété de la base Jean-Nicolet, des Forces armées canadiennes a une longueur d'environ 35 cm par environ 10 cm de diamètre et pèse plus de 13 kg. Un de ces fragments a touché la victime et sectionné en arbre d'une dizaine de centimètres de diamètre.

L'explosion d'un obus, jeudi, en soirée, a causé la mort de M. Pierre Gentes, 35 ans, de Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Nicolet et des blessures à neuf personnes. La flèche indique l'endroit où était l'engin explosif. La détonation a été telle qu'elle a été entendue à plusieurs kilomètres à la ronde, même sur la rive nord. Lors de cette explosion de l'engin, une vingtaine de parents et amis étaient à la Saint-Jean et le départ prochain de Pierre et François Gentes, et leur famille, pour une croisière d'un an dans le Sud, sinon autour du monde.

Two Vernon Boys Killed In Mortar Bomb Mishap

A Boy Scout work party, clearing land for a cabin on the Commonage, ended in tragedy Saturday when a World War II mortar bomb exploded, killing two of the boys and injuring a third.

Donald Hope, 14, and Grant Morgan, 12, were killed instantly when the mortar bomb exploded. David Crane, 11, is in Vernon Jubilee Hospital with leg injuries and facial lacerations suffered in the blast. His condition is described as good.

The boys, all members of the 5th Vernon Scout Troop, were part of a group of 17 who were planning to build a cabin on property owned by John Rose, five miles south of Vernon.

They had been given permission to use the land by Emil Klinger, who leased it from Mr. Rose.

Citizenship Court April 1

The next citizenship court to be held in Vernon will be on April 1 and not as announced in Thursday's paper.

The proceedings will begin at the courthouse at 2:30 p.m. when five new Canadians will be accepted as citizens.

The IODE Chrysler Chapter will present certificates, the Canadian Bible Society, Bibles, and the Women's Canadian Club entertain the principals at a coffee party at Trinity United Church ladies' parlor following the ceremony.

boys, under Scoutmaster Bill Martin, were clearing a site for the cabin. Donald, Grant and David were cleaning brush from the road into the cabin site, some distance away from the main group.

On their way back to the cabin site the boys found the mortar bomb, in a brushy gulley. It is believed to have exploded when it was picked up.

Mr. Martin had left the group to pick up other boys in Vernon, when the accident happened.

His assistant, Tym Overend, who was with the main group, said they heard an explosion, but at first thought it was blasting on the Commonage Road. When they went to investigate, the boys found David Crane had been injured and the two other boys were dead.

The Scouts administered what first aid they could to young Crane, and improvised a stretcher to carry him to the road, while one of the boys was sent to the Rose Ranch to summon aid.

The RCMP and an ambulance arrived as the Scouts were bringing out the injured boy.

Mr. Martin told The Vernon News he was not aware the property had been used by the army during the last war as a firing range.

An artillery officer in World War II, he said: "I would never have taken young boys in there if I had known."

Property Was Cleared
An army spokesman confirmed that the property had been used as a range in 1943, but had been cleared of shells.

Engineer Reports Oyama Water By Water

Oyama fruit growers who from nearby Oyama Lake, face this summer.

Former Vernon Irrigation District manager Ken Dobson, now assistant District Engineer of the Water Rights Branch at Kelowna, said both the North Okanagan and Winfield would have ample water because of their carry-over at Aberdeen and Beaver Lake respectively.

"It's critical," "But in Oyama it's critical," he told The Vernon News. "We won't be able to assess the problem exactly until our next snow survey April 1, but the situation at Oyama Lake is much the same as at Aberdeen."

Readings at Aberdeen Lake show the snow depth to be 7.7 inches, with a water content of 2.1 inches. This compares with last year's water content of 6.8 inches, and the nine year average of 6.3 inches.

Area men find mortar bombs

Berkley Shaw and a Vernon district man, concerned about the tragic deaths of two Okanagan Landing children last Sunday as a result of a mortar-like explosion, combed the Department of National Defence property and the Cosens Bay area Wednesday and made some startling discoveries.

"In one hour — not really digging — we came up with 15 or more tail fins of mortar bombs also two potentially dangerous mortars, and returned with the finds to Vernon", Mr. Shaw told The News.

The RCMP, who were contacted immediately, checked them but wisely declined to handle them. In turn, the RCMP notified Canadian Forces Base

Chilliwack's army demolition experts. The latter were due here Wednesday night.

Mr. Shaw admitted "it was a stupid thing for me to pick up the mortars. They are rusty. One detonator cap is intact and the other two-inch mortar bomb's detonator is partly missing."

After consulting with the RCMP, Mr. Shaw said he removed the potentially dangerous mortars to an unpopulated area outside Vernon so as not to endanger anyone.

"We proved our point. We want a combed search of all DND training property and any area where there may be potentially dangerous mortars. We found the bombs with just a little more than a one hour search."

The Vernon News
April 12, 1973

Twelve More Bombs Found; Still Danger in District

Twelve dangerous bombs and shells found in Vernon and nearby areas were destroyed harmlessly last week by the group of Royal Canadian Engineers who came here for this purpose. This action followed last week's tragedy in which three local youths lost their lives through the explosion of a two inch mortar shell.

One of the bombs handed over to the Army demolition experts was found by a city workman digging water lines in the Vernon Homes subdivision on Mission Hill. City Engineer F. G. deWolf said it was about nine inches under the surface of the ground and the workman struck it with the first thrust of his shovel. It was similar to the one which killed the three boys. The cap was off the shell and one fin was broken off, but the charge was still there, said Mr. deWolf.

Among those set off by the demolition crew was a 25-pound smoke shell. The others were two and three inch mortar bombs.

The demolition crew left Vernon at the weekend but placed its equipment in charge of Sgt.-Maj. O. E. Lee, R.C.E., officer stationed in Vernon, who will look after safe destruction of any further shells, bombs or "souvenirs" which are reported.

Captain T. R. Heal emphasized the warning against trespassing on the Military Camp area. He mentioned that the Riding Club was through the area on Sunday. The club meets tonight, Thursday, and will discuss the problem of finding suitable areas in the district which have not at some time been used as army ranges and battle practice grounds.

The Vernon News
May 6, 1948