

Army detonates Lihou ordnance



■ **BOMB DISPOSAL:** The 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) (Volunteers) has finished its work in Lihou looking for German explosive devices. Captain Emma Ross shows Mines Awareness Trust chairman Griff Caldwell pictures of some of the munitions uncovered.

(Picture by Peter Frankland, 0465557)

AS MANY as 20 unstable pieces of ordnance were found in Lihou by the army.

The island has been closed for the past two weeks to allow the 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) (Volunteers) to carry out a bomb sweep survey of the land.

Among the items found was a variety of explosives such as mortars and armour-piercing projectiles.

The pieces were too unstable to move from the island so were detonated together on Friday in a steep-faced pit in Lihou.

Another 91 stable pieces of ordnance were found, 17 sandbags full of explosive ordnance scraps, 30 sandbags full of other scrap metal and 25 bags of litter.

Captain Emma Ross said

by Simon Tostevin

the army, which had 34 members working in the island at any one time, had never experienced a sweep in a place such as Lihou before.

The results of its survey will now be presented to the police and the States.

'We will give maps over to the Guernsey government showing them what areas we have looked at, what depth we have searched to and what equipment we have used.

'It will give them an idea of where we have gone and how much we did.

'We feel we have cleared as much as we can, but our certificate will not say it's 100% clear. No matter who you are and where you've searched, you will never say a place is 100% clear.'

Capt. Ross said the house grounds had not been searched because a lot of foundation work had been done to it since the war.

The priory was also left untouched as it was deemed to carry too much archaeological importance.

A number of representatives from the Mines Awareness Trust were present on the headland to welcome the army team back from their two-week survey.

MAT chairman Major General Griff Caldwell said the discoveries in Lihou had proved why the trust had shown so much interest in the work being carried out.

'MAT founder Ben Remfrey is one of the most experienced bomb and mine detectors in the world and he has been very impressed with what the army have done here.

'They have done very well and have found a lot. I think that proves it needed to be done.'

Capt. Ross explained that when a member of the team found unsafe ordnance, it was examined by the bomb disposal officer, who would then decide whether it needed to be blown up where it was or whether it could be moved.

She said that none of the devices found in Lihou needed to be strategically detonated where they were and that was why on Friday they were all exploded in a pit.

'We moved them to the nearest and safest area which allowed us to carry on working. The pits are quite deep and narrow with steep sides, so the walls took as much of the blast's impact as possible.'

Lihou is now open to the public.