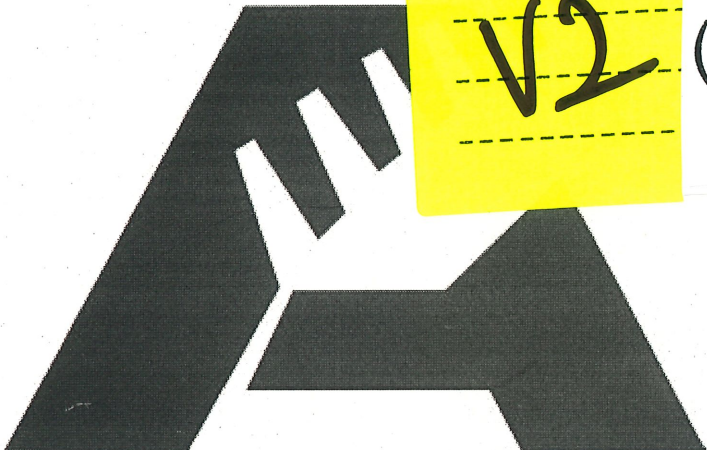


Peace Support operations

V2

(NZ Army, 2009d)



As at date of publication  
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Lebanon

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A specialist team of 10 NZDF battlefield clearance experts deployed to Lebanon in June 2007. The contingent was working in support of the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre in Southern Lebanon (UNMACC-SL) to help defuse the unexploded ordnance which litters the countryside following the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in July 2006. The final contingent was lead by Lieutenant Commander Trevor Leslie, RNZN, before New Zealand's commitment to UNMACC-SL ended in February 2008.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### Background:

During 2006 the thirty day war between Israel and Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon left substantial amounts of unexploded munitions scattered throughout urban areas and farmland. At the end of the conflict the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) estimated that more than one million unexploded cluster bomblets remained spread over 798 sites in southern Lebanon, mostly in urban or populated areas.

UNMAS rates the situation for unexploded ordnance, especially cluster bombs, in southern Lebanon as amongst the worst in recent experience.

### What was the NZDF contribution?

The NZDF contribution in Southern Lebanon consisted of a ten person Explosive Remnants of War Disposal (ERWD) Team who conducted Battlefield Area Clearance (BAC).

They worked in a niche capability to plan for, locate and dispose of unexploded munitions remaining in the region after the conflict of July 2006. They provided humanitarian assistance to restore the region for civilian use and occupation as part of the UNMAS operation in the area.

The team was led by a Navy officer and includes the following:

- Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team of three Royal New Zealand Navy personnel. Members of

the operational dive team will use their skills in a land based operation, working to remove unexploded munitions and reclaim areas for civilian use and occupation.

- Survey Technical Advice Team (STAT) of six NZ Army engineers. They will provide technical advice and support the EOD team by searching for Unexploded Ordnance (UXOs) and locating, identifying and marking bomblets for disposal.

### **How long did the NZDF maintain this commitment?**

The NZ Government committed NZDF personnel to Southern Lebanon for one year. The first NZ EOD Team deployed on 9 February 2007 and the mission ended in February 2008.

### **What experience does the NZDF have in this type of operation?**

The NZDF has a long standing connection to UNMAS through the secondment of an officer to UNMAS HQ in New York and through our de-mining efforts in Cambodia and Mozambique.

The NZDF has a robust and well respected unexploded ordnance disposal capability that has been proven within New Zealand as well as Afghanistan, Timor Leste and even the Tokelau Islands.

### **Where were the EOD team located?**

The team were based out of Tyre, Southern Lebanon.

### **What is the situation like in Lebanon now?**

An UN-brokered ceasefire began on 14 August 2006 leading to the withdrawal of Israeli military forces. Since that time the situation in Lebanon has stabilised significantly. Lebanese infrastructure was significantly damaged during the July conflict, and unexploded munitions remain a threat to the returning civilian population.

The environment was demanding for our personnel and there were environmental and personal risks involved in this deployment. All personnel had protective equipment and undertook robust training to prepare them for their roles and to minimise personal risk.

### **Who commanded the NZDF EOD team from New Zealand?**

The Chief of Defence Force maintains full command of the NZ ERWD Team; operational command of deployed NZDF personnel remains the responsibility of the Commander Joint Forces New Zealand.

This page was last reviewed on 25 March 2009 and is current.

