

Source Trove: The Sun Sydney Thu 23 Jan 1947

Houses Evacuated as Dutch Ammunition Depot Explodes in Queensland

Brisbane, Thursday. — All houses in the vicinity of the Darra ammunition depot near Brisbane were evacuated under police orders this afternoon following a big explosion at the depot at noon.

Firemen narrowly escaped death from flying steel fragments as high explosives blew up.

The depot is the property of the **Dutch Army** and is guarded by **RAAF** personnel.

Firemen were unable to reach the heart of the explosion for more than two hours after it was first reported, as huge pieces of white-hot metal flew through the air. Sherwood firemen were called to the scene, and police under Sergeant Lewis of Oxley, assisted by RAAF men, blocked all roads.

As the fire engine stopped at the gate leading to the fire area, a large piece of shrapnel shattered the windscreen and narrowly missed the crew. Pieces of metal were falling on the roadway, and the firemen retreated.

Police then ordered people living in houses nearby to evacuate, and five houses were cleared. The order was given after police had conferred with Station-Officer Lambert, who was in charge of the fire-fighters.

High explosives

Flames shot more than 20 feet into the air as high explosives went off. Jagged pieces of metal more than a foot long fell near houses.

Police feared that the fire would spread to an igloo about 20 yards away, in which a large quantity of ammunition was stored. Large quantities of high explosive bombs and shells were also stored in the area.

It is believed the fire was caused when rain penetrated into a sea marker.

After the blaze had died down, hand grenades with their pins almost free were scattered on the roadway.

Although the fire had subsided by 2 p.m., a close watch was being kept, as it was still feared that the fire might spread.