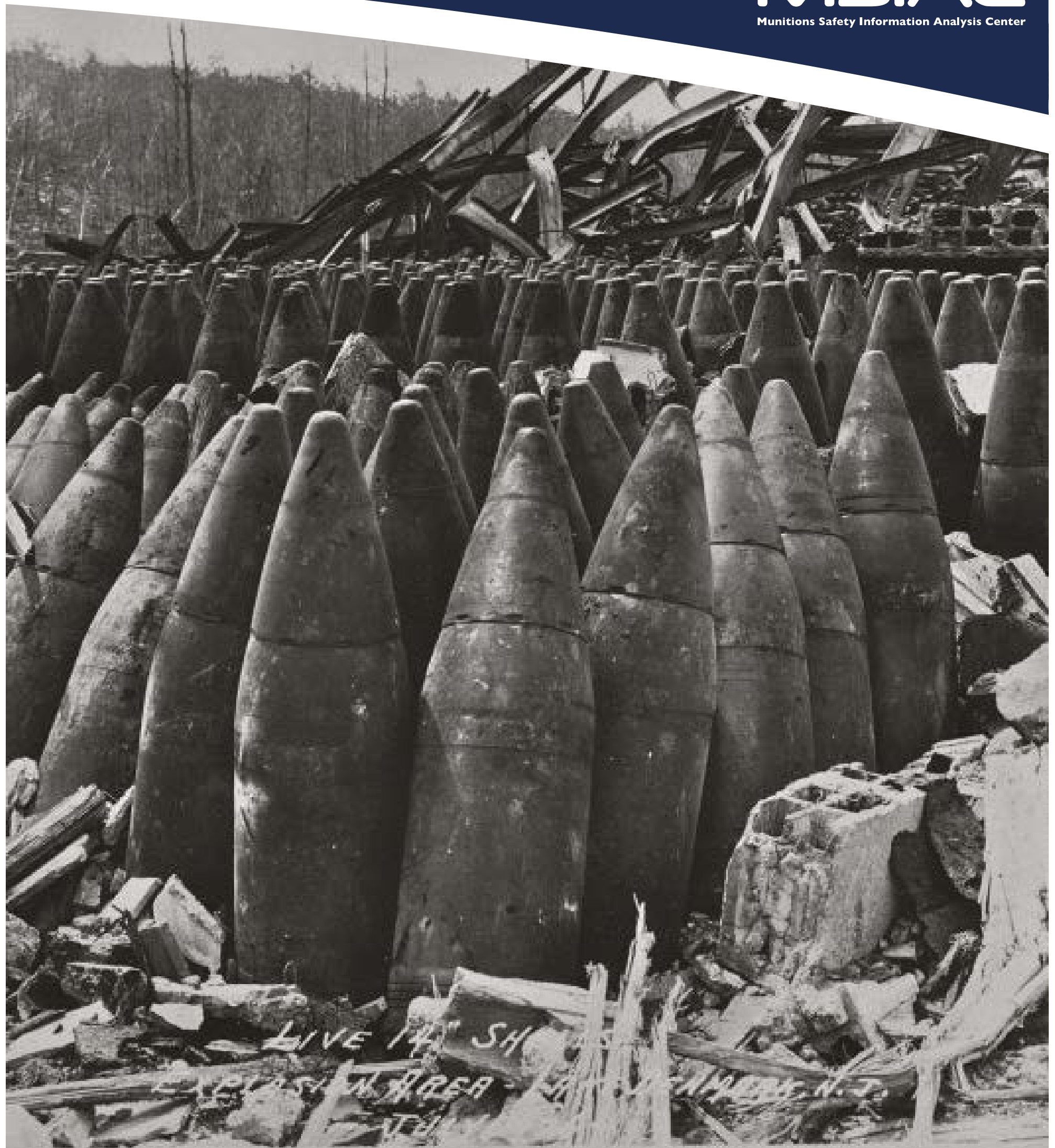
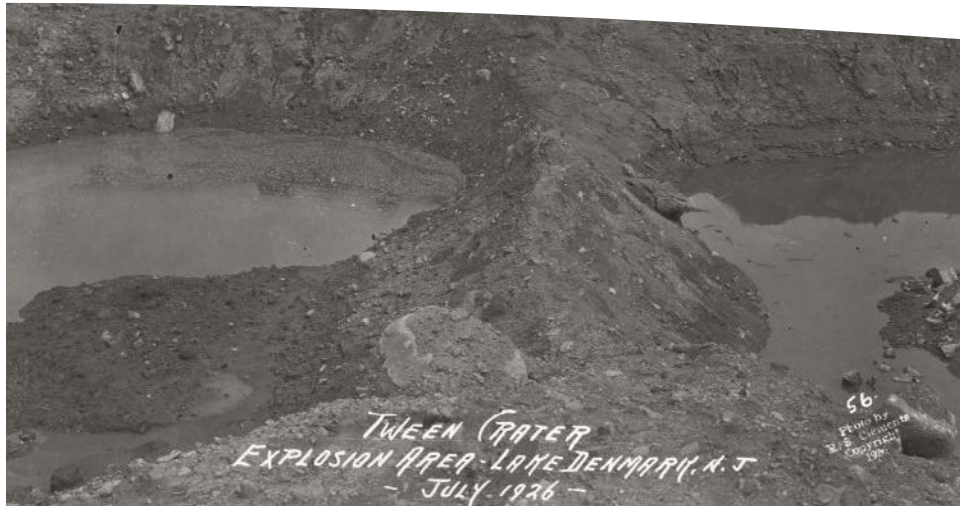


Lake Denmark, New Jersey, USA – 10 Jul 1926



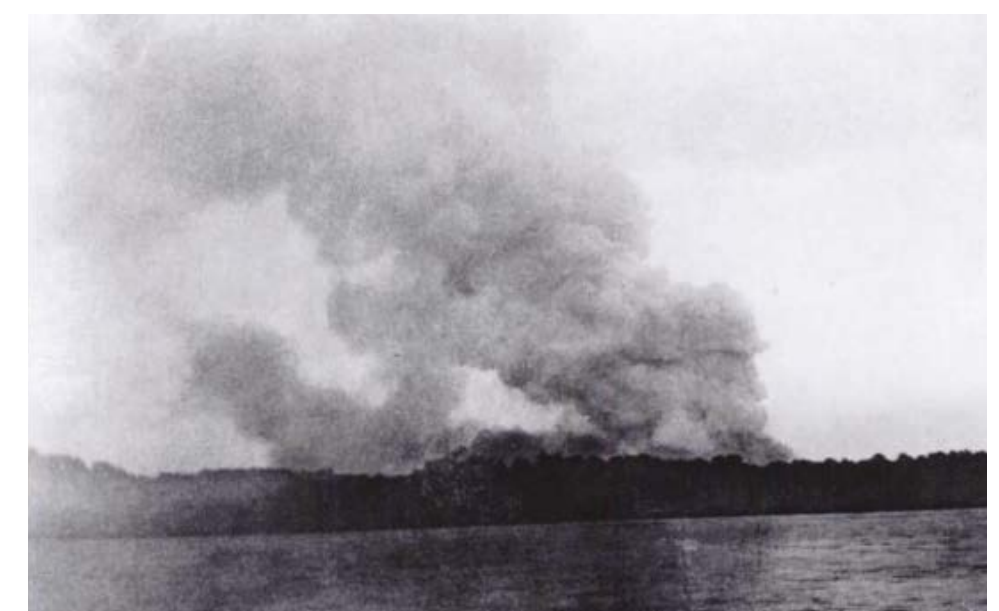
On the 10th July 1926 at 1715 hrs, a severe electrical storm struck the southwest end of the Lake Denmark Naval Powder Depot. A tree overhanging a Temporary Storehouse 8 that housed 300,000 kg of various types of explosives was hit and smoke was seen to rise from the building. Depot personnel responded to the fire call, rigged hose lines, and had one stream of water on the fire.

At 1720 hrs a detonation occurred and within 5 minutes of this blast, Temporary Storehouse 9 with 730,000 kg of bulk TNT also detonated. A third explosion involving 80,000 kg levelled Shell Storehouse 22; this was followed by smaller explosions that continued for the next four days.

With few exceptions, all structures within 1 km of Store Houses 8 and 9 were destroyed. Beyond this, many structures within the depot were seriously damaged. Picatinny Arsenal, located in a valley directly below the depot, also suffered considerable damage, affecting the production of TNT, Tetryl and nitrocellulose.

The primary cause is listed as lightning, exacerbated by dangerously overloaded magazines.

As a result of a full scale Congressional investigation, Congress directed the establishment of the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board (DDESB). The Board was directed to survey the storage of Army and Navy supplies of ammunition and components with special reference to those supplies located in such proximity to populous communities and industrial areas as to constitute a menace to life and property.



19 Fatalities

51 Injuries

US\$84 Million Damages (1926)