

GENERAL NOTES FOR THE PRESS.

These notes are offered to the Press in the hopes that they may be of assistance to them. They do not attempt to answer all possible queries. It does NOT attempt to "paint a picture" but to be factual.

A. INTRODUCTION

- (1) The Minefield is about 4 miles long and runs from a point between Mundesley-Trimingham to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from Overstrand. It was laid in 1940.
- (2) The mines weigh just over  $\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. of which 25 lbs. is T.N.T. (They are called "B" Type C) and are an Anti-vehicle/Anti-personnel dual purpose mine. Originally they required about 40 lbs. pressure on the lid to set them off. Now some require more than this to fire them as the lids have rusted to the sides of the mine. On others the safety devices have rusted away, and a very light pressure will fire them. There is no way of telling "which is which" or making them safe in their present condition other than by detonating them.
- (3) The mines were only laid, as far as is known on the cliff face. They were then buried a few inches deep. Since the war the cliffs have fallen and some mines have rolled into the beach and sea. Others became deeply buried and may become unburied again by later falls.
- (4) Because of the dangerous and difficult state of the cliffs an Act of Parliament in 1946 decided that the Clearance was impracticable and authorised the closing of the Minefield on *SEMI* perpetuity.
- (5) It has been found that these mines do get into the sea and tide action eventually brings them back onto the coast, still alive, in undesirable places. Owing to the risk to children and holiday makers it was therefore decided to try to clear the Minefield by cautiously working with a small party from one end. It was considered that the resultant experience would show whether the job was practicable or not.
- (6) So far 125 mines have been recovered since March in less than half a miles work.

B. METHOD OF CLEARANCE.

- (7) Instruments:- Two types are used.
  - (a) General Service pattern indicates metallic objects by making a humming noise - will find these mines up to 2 ft. down - easily portable and robust - used on cliffs when it is obvious that mines have not moved much since 1940.
  - (b) Special Type used by BD only. Very costly and delicate - can only be used in fine weather on more or less level ground - finds ferrous metals and picks up this type of mine at 5 ft. - used on beaches or level places on cliffs.
- (8) Detection:- Where the cliffs are scaleable, lanes about 6 ft. wide are swept gradually covering a complete section. Whenever an indication is received the object is carefully dug for using a trowel. It is marked with a mine marker and at the end of the day the mines found are destroyed in situ. Frequently one digs and only finds bits of scrap metal, sardine tins, wire etc.
- (9) Missing Mines:- Sometimes there is reason to believe that a mine has been missed. In this case a trench is dug near the suspected place and the soil carefully turned over. These trenches sometimes are 5 ft. deep and 10 yds long and have to be dug forward several yards. Eventually the mine is accounted for, probably having exploded years ago.
- (10) Armoured dozer:- When mines are likely to be buried deeply an armoured dozer cuts away the cliff bottom. The dozer works in conjunction with a detector party. They can tell the dozer operator where it is safe for him to make a shallow cut after which they re-sweep before further dozing occurs. Eventually/

/Eventually a cliff fall may occur in which case the process is repeated till virgin ground is reached.

- (11) High Pressure Jetting:- An armoured "Monitor" mounting a water jet advances to the base of a sandy cliff fall. Water is pumped into the monitor from a special wheeled pump at the rate of about 100,000 gallons per hour. Sand and mud are washed away thus allowing the mines to be found. If the jet explodes a mine the operator is protected by the Armour. If mines do not explode they are destroyed deliberately.

C. DESTRUCTION OF MINES.

- (12) To destroy a mine a charge of Guncotton or Plastic explosive is placed on the mine and fired with safety fuze or electrically.  
(13) It is NOT considered safe to move a mine.  
(14) A red flag is hoisted and a syren sounded before mines are destroyed.

D. OTHER WORK IN THE AREA.

- (15) During the flood of Jan. 1953 a shingle bank at SALTHOUSE was disturbed by the tide. In the following SEA DEFENCE WORKS mines were found. About 3 miles of shingle were swept and about 90 assorted mines destroyed. 39 Army Engineer Regt. helped with this.  
(16) A small number of Miscellaneous objects are reported through civil channels. Assistance is given as appropriate. These are usually mines on beaches or Home Guard relics.

E. REGIMENTAL NOTES.

- (17) Personnel:- Military - Normal posting. No special pay. Regular and National Servicemen.  
Civilian - British and German ex P.O.W. chosen for reliability and trustworthiness. Characterised by marked Team Spirit.  
(18) BD VEHICLES. Red mudguards which give certain traffic privileges in special emergencies *in war time*  
(19) THE BD BADGE. Distinctive badge initiated by H.M. Queen Mary. It is unique amongst Army badges because it is neither a mark of personal distinction or ability, nor is it a formation sign. It can only be worn by active members of the Bomb Disposal Service of the Royal Engineers.

Officer i/c Minefield Operations (H.K.) Maj J.B. BARTLEY, M.B.E. R.E.  
Officer i/c Trillickigan Minefield Capt. B.A. LIPSCOMBE, R.E.  
Late " " " " " " Capt. R.H. HUGH, C.M. R.E.