February 2006

Mine Action Support Group Update

CISR JOURNAL
Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU (CISR)

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A Study of Manual Mine Clearance

Manual mine clearance is the fundamental tenet of mine action and yet it has never been completely analysed. To that end, the GICHD, at the request of the United Nations Mine Action Service, commenced a detailed study into manual mine clearance in late 2003. The Study of Manual Mine Clearance sought to define a set of parameters that affect the efficiency of manual mine clearance and use it to develop benchmarks or planning figures for manual mine clearance (clearance rates, costs, etc.). The study also examined in detail the drills, techniques, equipment and procedures used for manual mine clearance, and considered the risk-management approach to the process of manual mine clearance. The study was developed in five specific areas and each section forms a stand-alone publication that complements the others.

• Historical summary and conclusions
• Management of manual mine clearance
• Operational systems in manual mine clearance
• Demonstration of new drills and conclusions
• Risk management and risk management of mined areas
• Costs of manual mine clearance

The study found today’s “humanitarian demining” is much safer than the major military-supervised clearing that occurred after World War II. While the rate of manual mine clearance is affected by many factors, the study found that worldwide an individual deminer clears on average 15 to 20 square metres (18–24 square yards) per day. The estimated cost of manual mine clearance varies widely from $0.60 to $8.73 (U.S.) per square metre, although every programme uses a different methodology to calculate costs. The study proposed a number of new drills and techniques that would help improve the efficiency of manual demining. However, it found the greatest productivity gains could be made with improvement at the middle-management level, through better training and empowerment of middle managers to make on-site decisions. Finally, it recommends consideration of a risk-reduction approach when setting priorities in situations where clearance resources are limited.

The study was released in September 2005 to coincide with the UNMAs National Directors’ meeting. A series of briefings and workshops will widely disseminate the findings of the study. Copies of the study can be obtained via the GICHD Web site (see contact information, left).

Ongoing Work at the GICH

The GICHD continues to undertake a wide range of work on the use of dogs for mine detection. The International Mine Action Standards on mine-detecting dogs have been reviewed and the new draft document of dogs for mine detection case studies and experimental trials. A study of the GICHD Web site, along with three new videos on the training of MDDs, guidebooks on the training of dogs and the use of Remote Explosive Scent Trace have also been published.

The development of the IMAS is undertaken by the GICHD on behalf of UNMAs. In 2005, 32 of the existing 38 IMAS were reviewed and endorsed by the IMAS Review Board, which met in September. The latest IMAS were always on the Standards Web site; however, the GICHD has issued a new compact disk (IMAS 2005) and also a revised edition of the easy-to-use Guide to IMAS. The publications can be ordered for free through the GICHD Web site (see contact information).

See "References and Endnotes," page 108

The following article highlights the recent activities of the Mine Action Support Group, including updates on the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF.

Mine Action Support Group Update

Excepted from the October 2005 M4ASO Newsletter

Eritrea/Ethiopia. In October, the Eritrean government banned the U.N. Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea from flying helicopters in Eritrean airspace. This ban led to mine clearance operations being suspended due to a lack of adequate casualty evacuation coverage. Survey, marking, mine risk education and training activities continued. The suspension of UNMEP demining brought to a halt the only demining occurring in Eritrea, as the national program was suspended in April due to the government’s confiscation of mine action program vehicles and a subsequent request by the Eritrean Demining Authority for UNDP to terminate the contracts of most UNDP technical advisors. Prior to the ban on helicopter flights in Eritrea, on Oct. 1, 2005, a civilian bus in Sector West hit a newly laid anti-tank mine. One passenger was killed, and 19 others were injured. After conducting an investigation into the accident, the Mine Action Coordination Centre instructed the route clearance contractor to conduct checks on all roads in the area, just prior to the suspension of operations. The MACC also issued a revised mine/UDT threat assessment for the mission area, as well as a new travel advisory.

Sudan. On Oct. 31, 2005, a Fondation Suiss de Déminalage mine clearance team working with the World Food Program’s road reconstruction and rehabilitation program was ambushed on Juba-Nimule road in southern Sudan, resulting in the deaths of two FSD colleagues (one international, one national staff) and injuries to two Sudanese soldiers. The United Nations has suspended all operations around the area and is evaluating the security situation. The U.N. Mine Action Office concluded a pre-deployment visit to the Kenyan military demining company to be sent to Wau, allowing the company to conduct manual demining activities in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards and granting immediate deployment. UNMAM conducted a training visit for the Egyptian military company to be deployed to Kadugli, and the company was successfully trained and accredited according to IMAS.

Update from UNDP

Angola. UNDP prepared a technical assistance program to provide support to the governmental operator INAD (National Demining Institute for Angola). After two rounds of consultation, a three-year project was proposed, formulated with technical assistance at the headquarters and training school to obtain increased management and training capacity, and enhanced technical capacity of INAD personnel. Design and construction of the national demining institute was completed. Survey, marking, mine risk education and training activities continued. Survey, marking, mine risk education and training activities continued. UNMAM conducted a training mission to the Egyptian military company to be deployed to Kadugli, and the company was successfully trained and accredited according to IMAS.
Uganda. Two clearance teams are start- ing operations in western Uganda (Kasene district). Forty police officers are underway on a humanitarian demining training program sponsored by the United Kingdom at the International Mine Action Training Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. In early 2006, combined clearance teams will begin operations in areas of northern Uganda affected by mines and explosive remnants of war. Needs assessments will be undertaken in two northern districts (Lira and Soroti). A key challenge is ongoing insurgent activity in parts of northern and northeastern Uganda, which is endangering MRE, victim assistance activities, and operational capacities, as well as the timely return/ reintegration of internally displaced persons.

An additional $790,000 is needed to make an survey/clearance/battle area teams fully opera- tional in Kasene and in northern districts. When funding needs are not met by December 2005, the clearance operations could be delayed, which might result in the delayed return and resettlement of IDPs in northern Uganda.

Update from UNICEF

Afghanistan. UNICEF is the coordi- nating agency of MRE for the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan and for the government of Afghanistan. Standardization of MRE activi- ties throughout the country began in 2002, and new MAPA training methodologies for community-based MRE activities have in- cluded peer education activities, police train- ing and direct implementation of MRE in IDP camps and at border crossing points and encampment centers. MRE activities have been integrated into Ministry of Education teacher training programs that have trained and pro- vided materials for some 63,000 formal and informal primary school teachers. A self-ad- vocacy and rights awareness training program for landmine survivors and people with disabilities by making the country mine-safe before 2010. Although there is no liaison be- tween Tajikistan and Uzbekistan regarding landmine issues and mine action, the program has been expanded to four other regions and hopes to target at least 400 people in 15 provinces.

Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to provide technical, financial and logistical support to the BH Mine Action Centre and other or- ganizations. BHMAC recently ran an MRE management course for 25 participants to ap- ply MRE planning at the community level, conducted MRE presentations for UN, security staff in five municipalities and a national coordination meeting regarding the transfer of the International Committee of the Red Cross Mine Victim Database to BHMAC. UNICEF supported the local NGO Gence Project in conducting 120 workshops on topics of MRE integration for teachers and peer educators. Indian NGO INTERNOURS conducted MRE training courses for lo- cai civil protection departments, communi- ty-based organizations, NGOs and private and public companies, aimed at improving implementation of Mine Risk Education ca- mpaigns for endangered groups in rural areas. Local NGO Ani-Mine Initiative began planning a project to develop 15 MRE plans for communities. The current financial situation of the UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Programme is of serious concern as no funding is available for 2006. UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina ur- gently requires $800,000 for 2006.

Cambodia. In August 2005, the Cambodian Mine/UXO Victim Information System reported 36 new casualties. This shows a decrease of 27 percent compared to the 49 casualties reported in August 2004. Of the 36 casualties, 75 percent were men, 23 women were aged 18 years or under, 10 percent were under the age of 1 and 2 percent were women. UXO injured or killed 42 percent of the casualties, while the other 58 percent were mine casualties. Thirty-four percent of the victims were in- jured or killed while farming or tending with UXO and 19 percent were injured or killed while farming. For the last 12 months, the number of casualties totalled 955. UNICEF provides financial and technical support for national MRE coordination through the Cambodian Mine Action/Victim Assistance Authority and community-based mine risk reduction, mass media and school MRE campaigns. Prostheses, wheelchairs and assistance for re- habilitation to children and women victims of landmines/UXO continued.

Russian Federation. According to infor- mation UNICEF gathered in each district of Chechnya, no new mine/UXO-related incidents involving civilians were reported in 2005. In August 1995, UNICEF has re- corded 3,031 mine/UXO civilian victims (2,540 wounded and 641 killed), including 737 children (612 wounded and 125 killed). Meanwhile, UNICEF and its partner or- ganizations have continued to disseminate MRE messages. Some 450 children from Grozny secondary schools participated in MRE drama presentations/groups. The Republican Clinical Hospital completed the treatment of 27 mine/UXO-affected children. Additional medical equipment has been provided, improving the quality of ser- vices. UNICEF’s recent monitoring mission to Grozny assessed the need for additional training for medical staff. Meanwhile, some 18 mine/UXO-affected children started school on new prosthetic appliances pro- vided by Grozny’s Prosthetic Workshop.
Geneva Diary: Report From the GiCHD, Mansfield [from page 82]

Endnotes
2. One square metre is approximately equivalent to 1.2 square yards.

Mine Action Support Group Update, October 2005 MASG Newsletter [from page 85]

Endnotes


LRC System Allows Remote Disposal, Barthold [from page 89]

Endnote:
1. Patent pending.

How Deminer Position Contributes to Injury, Jetté, Dionne, Maach, Makris, Ceh and Bergeron [from page 93]

Endnotes
6. It continues despite approximately 4 inches.
7. Fractured sand is sand that has been pulverized by explosive forces, with silica dust as the main by-product of this process.
8. NRC 2011 refers to the NRC Recommended Practice 2011, Instrumentation for Impact Tests (NRCRRP). It provides standards for the performance of equipment in impact tests.
13. 1 g = 9.8 m/s².

QR Hits a Homerun: Landmine-Detection Systems Based on Quadrupole Resonance Technology Show Progress, Turner and Williams [from page 95]

Endnotes

Rats to the Rescue: Results of the First Tests on a Real Minefield, Verhagen, F. Weetjens, Cox, B. Weetjens and Billet [from page 100]

Endnotes

Blast Protection For UXO Operations Including Demining, Miles [from page 103]

Endnotes
3. In collaboration with INSYS Ltd. in the United Kingdom.

Errors
The editorial staff of the Journal goes to great effort to make sure that what is printed in our magazine is accurate, properly documented and unbiased. However, in Issue 9.1 there were two errors for which we feel we must apologize. In the staff-written profile of Afghanistan (pages 66-67), our writer misinterpreted something that was written in an earlier article by Patrick Fruchet (http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/8.1/features/fruchet/fruchet. htm) and we alluded to a conflict, which apparently does not exist. Mr. Fruchet wrote to us to clarify, saying, "Our deminers are NOT in ‘conflict’ with ISAF…” We humbly apologize for this accidental error, and thank Mr. Fruchet for calling it to our attention. We mistakenly attributed the article, "Mine Action in Yemen An Example of Success" (pages 10-11, 17), to Mansour Al Azi. It was actually written by Faiz Mohammad, UNDP Mine Action Support Group Update, October 2005 MASG Newsletter.