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2012 Humanitarian Demining Research and Development Workshop

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2012 Humanitarian Demining Research and Development Workshop

by Edward Lajoie [Center for International Stabilization and Recovery]- [view pdf](#)

Representing the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery, Ed Lajoie, assistant project manager and research specialist, and Lois Carter Crawford, editor-in-chief of The Journal of ERW and Mine Action, attended a workshop from 19 to 21 June 2012 sponsored by the Department of Defense's Demining Research and Development Program. This workshop hosted mine action representatives from around the world to discuss technologies currently used and the need for other technologies in mine detection and removal, their functionality, detection and removal strategies, as well as to demonstrate the use of several of these technologies.

Since 1996, the Department of Defense's Humanitarian Demining Research and Development Program has brought together representatives from nongovernmental demining organizations, national militaries and mine action centers from mine-affected countries, the U.S. Department of State, the Organization of American States and other organizations to attend a multi-day technology requirements workshop. The workshop is organized to ensure a solid understanding of participants' most critical equipment needs.

Participants and Presentations

On average, 80 participants attend the workshop every two years to share different perspectives and experiences from within the mine action community, learn about HD R&D current projects and technologies, and listen to presentations on participants' mine action efforts. HD R&D Program Manager Sean Burke explained the workshop's importance, "The information we obtain through this workshop, combined with one-on-one meetings with each organization, is critical in order for us to focus our development efforts on technologies most needed in the minefields."

Col. Gerry Muhl, chief, explosive ordnance disposal and humanitarian mine action in the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict, directly oversees the execution of the US\$13 million HD R&D program.¹ Following Muhl's greeting on the first day of the workshop, representatives from MAG (Mines Advisory



The Mini MineWolf set off a planned explosion during its demonstration.
All photos courtesy of CISR.

Group), Golden West Humanitarian Foundation and the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery presented on various topics ranging from their current operational environments and technologies to international field requirements and challenges. CISR presented on its Landmine Aging Study, *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action* and *To Walk the Earth in Safety*. HD R&D presented on its products, including its latest technologies for detection and clearance. Its clearance technologies include in-house mechanical assets as well as upgraded, commercial off-the-shelf technologies.

Field Presentations and Final Day

On the second day of the workshop, the group traveled to the HD R&D Program's test facilities to see HD R&D's work in action. Facilitators demonstrated ground preparation technologies such as the Wolverine brush cutter and mechanical clearance assets including the Rotary Mine Comb, an anti-tank mine unearthing device, the Mini MineWolf, a remote-controlled machine that can be fitted with a tiller or flail, the ARMTRAC, an armored tractor, and more. The HD R&D team also showcased the Hedgehog: a COTS tractor upgraded with a side-looking, large-loop metal detector, armored cab and a vegetation cutter. This machine is particularly suited for clearing roadsides.



Ed Lajoie examines the arm of a Badger medium weight excavator.

The detonation of a 250 g charge during the Mini MineWolf demonstration allowed us to see firsthand the resiliency of this demining tool. Further demonstrations included the Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System (HSTAMIDS) (a dual-sensor mine detector combining a metal detector and ground-penetrating radar to reject clutter and achieve a lower false alarm rate), the Hedgehog and the PAC-MAG (a man-portable detector consisting of four cesium magnetometers and a global positioning system).²

On the final day of the workshop, The HALO Trust presented on its mine-detection and removal technologies, and various country programs—the Cambodian Mine Action Centre, the Chilean National Demining Commission, Colombia's Presidential Program for Mine Action, Comprehensive Action Against Anti-personnel Mines, the Thailand Mine Action Centre and the Peruvian Mine Action Center—discussed their

programs. Representatives from the country programs discussed projects and challenges from the field as well as the current and latest technologies. Participants met directly with HD R&D representatives responsible for creating and improving demining field assets to brief them on needs—an invaluable opportunity for participants and HD R&D members alike.

The Future

It may be somewhat challenging for competitive nongovernmental organizations to work together due to the shrinking donor pool, but the HD R&D Requirements Workshop is designed to encourage cooperation. By working with colleagues worldwide, mine action personnel can articulate what technologies will best serve them in the field, what challenges remain and what specific technologies would help them meet these challenges. They learn how others have solved similar problems, and HD R&D receives valuable feedback and input to assist with improving or developing its various technologies. 🌐

Biographies



Edward Lajoie joined the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery in April 2011 as an assistant for its Senior Managers' Course in ERW and Mine Action and is now a program assistant and research specialist for CISR. He graduated from James Madison University in May 2011 with a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations with a concentration on the Middle East.

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Endnotes

1. "Unmanned Systems in Overseas Contingency Operations Seminar." National Defense University, Center for Technology and National Security Policy Event. *ISN*. <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?fecvnodeid=128064&groupot593=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&dom=1&fecvid=21&ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&v21=128064&lng=en&id=153870>. Accessed 26 July 2012.
2. More information on HD R&D's technologies can be found on their website: <http://humanitarian-demining.org>.

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[TOP OF PAGE](#)

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