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Making Ordnance Identification Available to Everyone

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Field Notes

Making Ordnance Identification Available to Everyone

by Howard Rudat [MAPPS, Inc.]

The continued focus on the use of mobile technology in support of humanitarian demining operations has not only highlighted how these technologies can be adapted and used but has also resulted in tangible tools that can be put to use now. Despite these advances, the cost and availability of these capabilities remains a challenge when resources are limited. Together, the U.S. Army's Unexploded Ordnance Center of Excellence (UXOCOE), the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery (CISR) at James Madison University, and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) have solved a key part of that problem by providing resources and access to make a critical set of information available to a wide audience at no cost: the Collaborative Ordnance Data Repository (CORD). CORD provides access to over 5,000 ordnance items that assist demining organizations in the proper identification of explosive remnants of war (ERW), including data on over 700 landmines. Unfortunately, until recently, this information was only available when connected to the internet or when using specific demining toolsets that included the CORD information.

The resources and access provided by UXOCOE, CISR, and GICHD respectively have now allowed for the development of an Android-based, mobile application called **Landmines App**, which contains the 700 landmine records available in the larger CORD database. The Landmine App is available as a free download on the Google Play Store. Anyone with an Android smartphone can now download the landmine information contained in CORD for use anytime, anywhere—no internet connection or specialized mobile devices are required. It can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/2qy4t1Q>.

Developed by MAPPS, Inc., this application is seen as the first step in a crowd-based solution to the global mine problem. By empowering the local population with information and tools, they can assist in creating baseline information to assist demining operations in the future. Using the Google Play Store, users can provide feedback on the application, which will ensure that future versions of the application are developed based on the needs of the community, making the application even more valuable. Provided the necessary resources are available, any updates to the Landmines App would be coordinated with GICHD, which now manages CORD, to insure

that the application is in line with their vision for the CORD database.

There is no greater source of information than the local population who spend their lives working and living in the vicinity of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). Couple this proximity with the dramatic advances in mobile technology, often in the most rural areas, and you have an opportunity for the collection of a vast amount of information regarding the location and extent of explosive hazard contamination prior to any surveying operation being conducted. Having access to technology such as the Landmines App provides a common tool that allows for a more accurate and thorough sharing of information between the local population and demining organizations. It is hoped that future versions of this application can include information from the field such as updated images that capture what these ordnance items actually look like after being exposed to the elements for decades. ©

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Howard Rudat is a retired U.S. Army Colonel who served as an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) officer in the United States Army for 30 years. He served at all levels from the company to the Army and Department of Defense staffs. After retiring, Rudat became the chief executive of MAPPS, Inc., a service-disabled veteran-owned small business focused on identifying and integrating emerging technologies into the U.S. military to support their global missions.

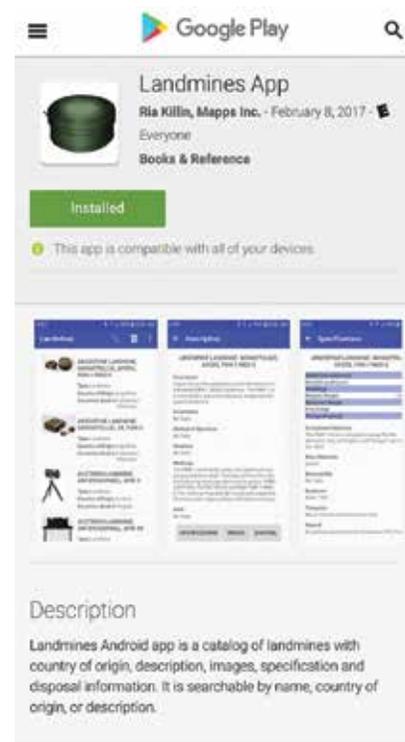


Figure 1. Landmines Application in Google Play store.

Figure courtesy of Google.