

## 9. BASE E: THE MINE CLEARERS

### 9.1 AIM OF THE BASE

To make the players aware of the difficulties of mine clearance.

### 9.2 THE THEORY

Clearing an area of mines is a long and tedious affair. In one day, a mine clearer can only

clear an area of about 50 square metres. With current techniques, mines that cannot be detected by metal detectors can be manufactured. Either specially trained dogs therefore must be used, or the area is checked inch by inch.

*Mine clearers at work*

Photo HI



Photo ICRC





*Mine clearers must not step in any area which has not been checked by the detector*

### 9.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE BASE

The players arrive at the base, which is a mine clearing area. They then take part in the mine clearance work. The base is divided into several areas:

#### **The minefield: detecting and marking the mines**

Marked out with rope, this area is riddled with fake mines (metal pieces). With the aid of a metal detector, the players have to locate the mines. Once located, a mine has to be marked with a coloured cone. The players will have to pay attention and only walk where the metal detector has been.

#### **The mine clearing base**

A number of small bases setting the scene for games of skill are set up around the mined area. Several types of game are possible, for example:

- The mine gyroscope (difficult to carry out)  
A movement-sensitive mine, identical to those placed in

the field, is placed in a sand tray. The players have to try to remove it and walk 10 metres without triggering the mechanism.

- The water-filled balloon (easier to carry out)  
A small balloon filled with water, which is extremely sensitive to movement, is placed in a sand tray. The aim is to try and remove it with small sticks and walk 10 metres with it.

As a general rule, any game that requires delicate manipulation can be set up at this base. For example, passing a ring over a wire without touching it, jackstraws, etc.

In the games where mines are involved, it is important that 95% of these fake mines explode, so as to demonstrate the danger of mine clearing to the participants and to explain that this work must be left for the professional mine clearance teams.

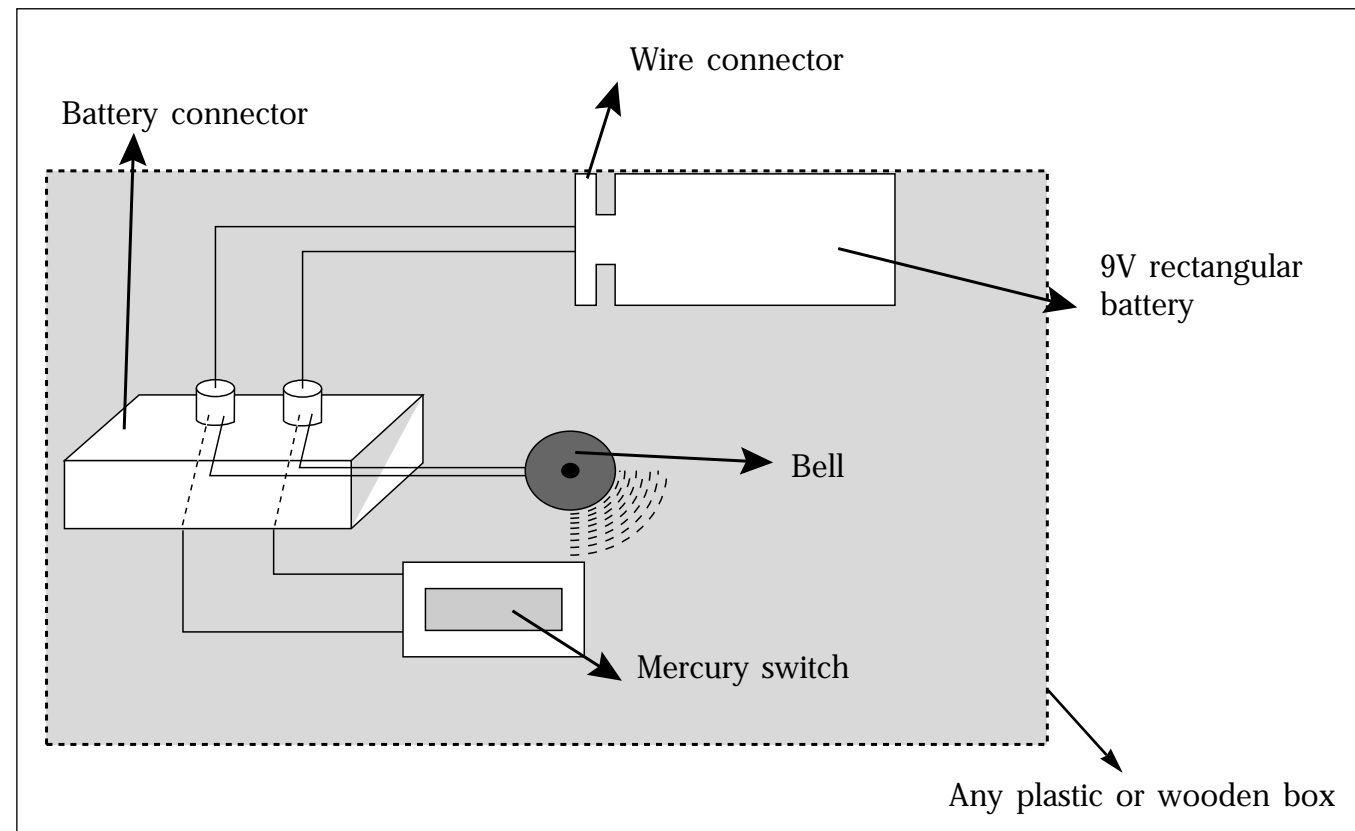
If this awareness game takes place in a country affected by the mine problem, the games at this base must be modified so the participants never touch a mine. The message to convey is the following: if someone suspects the existence of a mine, it must immediately be reported to the professional mine clearance teams, and must not be touched.

NB: This base must be well organised, as time is short!

#### 9.4 MATERIAL

- rope
- metal detector (NB: could be borrowed from plumbers, who use them to locate pipes)
- hard hat (with visor)
- if possible, explosion-proof vest
- small sticks
- pieces of metal (=mines to be detected)

- mine gyroscope (see instructions on the next page)
- sand tray
- paper, to make marking cones





#### SPECIFICATIONS: MINE GYROSCOPE

*The battery is linked to a bell with a mercury switch. Each motion pushes the mercury bubble towards the inner contact. This will provide current and the bell will ring. The difficulty consists in placing the bubble close to the inner contacts. It is important to obtain the mercury contact in a plastic box (as well as the glass bulb which contains the*

*mercury) for protection; remember that mercury is a very toxic substance and can be very harmful to the environment. After use it must be returned to the sales point, or disposed of in an adequate recycling area.*

#### 9.5 CLOTHING

Mine clearer outfit: protective glasses, hard hat, thick shoes, protective gloves, explosion-proof vest

#### 9.6 LEADERS

A minimum of 3 leaders, but ideally 4.

#### 9.7 DISCUSSION

Due to lack of time, it is best not to have a discussion at the end of this section. However it is important to show photos of mine clearers in action for the participants to view.

The important message at this stage is that mine clearing:

- takes time
- is very expensive
- is very dangerous.

*Mine detection: it is important to walk only on the areas covered by the mine detector.*





MINES! An awareness game on the problem of anti-personnel mines. Page 34

Photo ASG



Photo ASG

*A mine clearance expert in action: contact with the mercury in this mine bursts the rubber ball if the mine clearer makes an excessively sudden move.*