



MineBurner
UXO CLEARANCE SYSTEM

**HANDICAP
INTERNATIONAL**
Vivre debout

REPORT TRAIN THE TRAINER COURSE MINEBURNER SYSTEM HERMANUS, SOUTH AFRICA 09 - 13 MARCH 2009

EXTRACTS

2. Since the successful demonstration, trial and subsequent purchase of MB for the BHMAG and SEERMAP in 2007, the decision to buy a secondary MB system for the Senegal MAP was taken in November 2008. In order for the Handicap International (HI) RT Déminage to be competent in the normal operating procedures and to be able to train technicians to become competent MineBurner Maintenance Engineers, The RT Déminage attended the MineBurner Train the Trainer course from 09 to 13th March 2009.

Training Programme

5. The training programme is designed to train the trainer to teach MB Operators (“operatives”) how to use MB and to teach the operatives basic fault finding skills. It is also designed to train the trainer in how to train a technician. This person, whilst not necessarily an operative, would preferably be a person (more likely a skilled electrician with a good mechanical background), to become a MineBurner Maintenance Engineer.

6. The programme further went on to state that:

- At the successful completion of the course the Graduate will be familiar with all MB Components.
- The graduate will be competent to train operatives to use MB in the Field and carry out fault finding and trouble shooting tasks in order to solve or report faults fully to the Maintenance Engineer.
- The graduate will be able to perform the functions of Maintenance Engineer.
- The graduate will be equipped to train a suitable technician to be a Maintenance Engineer to test, service, maintain, repair and replace faulty components.
- The successful graduate will be awarded a certificate as:
 - ❖ A MineBurner Operative
 - ❖ A MineBurner Operative Trainer
 - ❖ A MineBurner Maintenance Engineer Trainer

a. Whilst the RT Déminage had the benefit of attending a MB operator course in Bosnia, in November 2008, there was still a distinct advantage in attending the Train the Trainer course. Attending the training in the place that the MB is constructed gives the trainee unlimited access to

the skills and knowledge of the development staff. It was extremely interesting to have the whole concept of the development of MineBurner explained and also the science behind the actual operation i.e. why the compressed air bladder is folded in a particular way etc.

c. The “field phase” of the course is of particular value. This gives the student an important insight into the considerations required to be made when deploying the equipment in a field environment

d. Of outstanding value is the requirement of the trainee to “retro-train” his or her trainer, i.e. after each day’s session, the student is required to conduct actual training (with one of the staff as the “guinea-pig) on what he or she has learned that day. This is not only excellent revision but a very good system of instructional confirmation as it gives the trainer an immediate real-time grasp of whether or not the student has fully assimilated the content of the day’s activities.

e. A unique (and, it is to be noted, very refreshing) point about the Train the Trainer Course is that there is no theory phase at all. The course is entirely practical which the RT Déminage found excellent. The equipment is unique in that do to the design and deployment, there would be little point in providing an initial PowerPoint presentation when the student can go straight out into the workshop and get stuck in - fantastic.

Conclusions

14. Deployability: The MineBurner is easily deployable on operations by vehicle, and easy to deploy on site. MineBurner can also be transported easily by air, as there are no explosive or hazardous materials involved in the construction or design of the equipment. This provides a huge advantage as the organisation does not have to rely on special flights or other transport methods as we would have to if, for example, HI were using explosives or flares.

15. HI’s Continued Interest: MineBurner is definitely worth HI’s continued interest and investment. Admittedly, when first viewed the MB gives the impression of looking rather complicated. However in this case looks are very much deceiving. The MB is easy to operate and it is a boon to HI projects (e.g. Senegal) where the access to explosives is severely limited to non-existent. The MineBurner is also worthwhile considering for future projects (depending on type of UXO/ERW encountered), particularly if HI would have to budget for the purchase of explosives (e.g. Lebanon in 2006) or the cost of another agency conducting EOD Operations on our behalf (Bosnia). In fact, significant savings are to be made in this area as not only the cost of explosives has to be accounted for but also the storage, transport and security requirements can be substantial.

20. The Course: The RT Déminage is an ex-military engineer, with many years training experience including four years at the Royal New Zealand School of Military Engineering, the Centre of Excellence for Combat Engineer and Trade Training in the New Zealand Army. For the reasons listed in paragraph 9e, it is considered that for a team who has no formal training experience (that the RT knows of) the MineBurner Training Course was exceptionally well run. The instruction received was excellent and informative, and the staff were at all times courteous, professional and diligent in all aspects of the curriculum.

Summary

The MineBurner is not as complicated as it looks. It is merely different. The course in Bosnia and in particular the training opportunity in Hermanus, which included many opportunities to practice with the equipment, has more than assuaged any initial reservations. As shown in the NPA report and as discussed with the developers, the economic analysis suggests that MineBurner is an economically viable option for mine action programs, especially where there are logistic, administrative or political difficulties in obtaining high explosive.