

disposal platoons this voluntary work may mean some financial sacrifice.

When a mine is located on the coast it is reported to the nearest Army District H.Q., which calls out the local bomb-disposal men. These men regard every mine as dangerous, even though they recognize its type and know exactly how to deal with it. They always have a minimum number—never more than two—within 500 yards of the mine, and they strip their clothes off so that there is nothing metallic about them. All doors and windows within a radius of three-quarters of a mile are opened to avoid damage by blast.

Whenever possible mines are degaussed so that the bomb-disposal men can see whether there is anything new in the mechanism. When this inspection is completed a signal is sent to a naval base for directions on the disposition of the mine. Should the mine be counter-mined or burned? And does the Navy want the shell or mechanism plate returned?

When we say a mine is burned we mean that the 500 lb. of H.E. it contains is removed and burned in small pieces. The bomb-disposal men wear rubber gloves on this work to avoid the acute dermatitis which handling the H.E. would cause. Even though the H.E. is burned in small pieces the flame it gives is intensely hot and will fuse the sand for 50 yards round.

Counter-mining with an H.E. charge can be done only on a beach where there is no habitation within two miles. This is a method of disposition used when the mine is of a well-known type, and no more specimens of it are required. If the mine happens to be on an inhabited beach, and the bomb-disposal men want to counter-mine it they have to wait for the tide and then float it out to sea or remove it by other methods to some uninhabited place. Sometimes it is necessary to turn a mine over on the beach for examination. The procedure then is to pass a rope through two little holes in the mine, called "lifting eyes," and then, from a slit trench some distance away, to pull on the rope until the mine is in the desired position.



**The works of a mine.**

If you ask the bomb-disposal people to tell you exactly what a mine is they will probably reply, in Service style, that it is a non-mobile torpedo which may take any one of a number of different forms and which may be activated in any one of a number of different ways. The most common type is the anchored mine with all its variants, including several types of electric contact mine, antenna mines, mines which rise to effective position at a predetermined time after being laid, and mines attached to anchor nets. There are also floating mines, which may be dropped by a ship fleeing from an enemy, and, of course, the magnetic and acoustic types, which lie on the sea-floor. The experts will point out to you that all these differ from torpedoes not only because they are stationary, waiting for their prey to come to them, but because they are tactically effective in the absence of the craft that laid them.

Each type of mine has its special uses and peculiar limitations. Anchored mines can usually be swept up by the simple expedient of catching and cutting the cables holding them to their anchors. Ships proceeding in unswept channels use paravane sweeps for protection.