



Training with sub-munitionsThe Belgian Approach

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As Belgium has played in the past an international leading role in the ban and the disposal of its antipersonnel mines, good national initiatives were taken in 2006 to get rid of its “problematic” stocks of sub-munitions without waiting the Oslo treaty.

In parallel of those steps, in an operational context, the Belgian EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) Battalion was confronted with the remnants of war created by the use of munitions and its cruel impact on the civilian populations throughout the world.

The problem of sub-munitions was encountered in several countries such as KOSOVO, CAMBODJA, LAOS and more recently LEBANON. Every time it was a race against time to enable a post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction of the impacted countries as soon as possible.

With the missions abroad, the EOD battalion is convinced that profound technical knowledge and experience is essential in order to reduce the risk when working on a unexploded munition. Therefore all teams have to apply state of the art procedures based on international standards (IMAS).

Prior to each deployment, the EOD teams attend a tailored course on the procedures to apply, followed by a practical training on detection procedures with the UXO locator (metal detector) and on the procedures to organize a Battle Field Area clearance operation. Finally, training on the disposal and render safe procedures is organized with inert and/or live ammunitions. To reach an acceptable operational degree, it is obvious that the EOD Team member and Team leader have to train and work with live ammunition before being deployed.

Therefore, the purpose of the presentation is to establish a requirement to retain a LIMITED quantity of explosive sub-munitions only for instructional and training purposes and to stress the need of a good and effective international system allowing the exchange of sub-munitions stockpile to be able to reach a good operational level to treat the encountered sub-munitions wherever an EOD unit can be deployed.