



Press Release

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DVD on animal mine detection

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has published a series of three short films on animal mine detection, available as a DVD.

Animals are an important tool for deminers because, “they have a keen sense of smell and they work faster and more cost efficient than manual demining. Dogs are at their best in low density minefields. Reducing the area to pinpointed threats is a time consuming process for manual demining, and dogs can do the job much more quickly”, says Dr. Ian G. Mc Lean, a mine dog specialist from the GICHD.

One of the films describes a relatively new technology, Remote Explosive Scent Tracing (REST), which involves bringing the odour of the minefield to a detection animal working elsewhere. “Although first used 15 years ago, this technology was never properly developed. Recently, the GICHD has been supporting further developments and deployments, and the REST concept is now gaining acceptance.”

Two types of animals are now used in the minefields: dogs and rats. “Early experience with African pouched rats showed that they could easily be trained, and their ability to detect specific odours was similar to that of a dog”, says Dr. Ian G. Mc Lean. Rats are already being trained, and their first use as REST detectors is planned in Sudan for September 2005.

Designed primarily to support training, the films are each 30 minutes long, and are on training and deployment of mine detection animals, remote detection using animals and vapour detection.

The DVD is available free of charge to the general public and to the mine action community and can be ordered online at <http://www.gichd.ch/publications> . It can be broadcast without restrictions by private and public television stations, as long as the copy-right of the GICHD is acknowledged.

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