



STAR PHOTOS BY ELWOOD BAKER

M/Sergt. York holds a grenade fuse behind a collection of mortar shells. The grenades have a criss-cross pattern for fragmentation when they burst. Veteran York has never had an accident in disposal work. "You only have one in this business," he says.

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"We went after the 250s first. When we removed the fuses, we discovered that the TNT inside had turned molten and was starting to run out of the fuse wells. We grabbed handfuls of dirt and jammed them in the opening. Then we got those babies out of there."

The other bombs and the ammo were so hot Sgt. Miller and the others had to use gloves to carry the stuff. It is, perhaps, understandable that after it was over, the men tore a new pack of cigarettes in half to get it open.

Their primary job is to keep the impact areas "clean" at Quantico. There are eight big ranges where almost every weapon in the Marine arsenal is fired. After each firing or demonstration, the EOD men have work to do, blowing up or defusing the unexploded bombs or shells. Once, fourteen 100-pound bombs failed to explode. Gunner Gidlewski's men had to locate and handle them.

The men are T/Sergt. Guy H. York (the NCO in charge), T/Sergt. George R. O'Connor, S/Sergt. Patrick L. Woolley and M/Sergt. John T. Moran. All were trained in either the Mine Disposal School at the Naval Gun Factory in Washington, the

Bomb Disposal School once located at American University, or the Naval School for Explosive Ordnance Disposal at Indian Head, Md. Each man must have a five-week refresher course every 18 months to two years.

The Indian Head school includes instruction in every known piece of ordnance, including electronic and atomic weapons. Some of the equipment is classified, but in most cases the men just approach a bomb with wire cutters, crimpers, a pocket knife—and knowledge.

But they need more than that. They are required to work under pressure with the calmness of a taste-tester in a tranquilizer pill factory. The unfit, psychologically, are weeded out without prejudice.

After all, a man who could walk into a cageful of tigers whistling the Marine Corps hymn might not know—until he tried it—that defusing a live bomb could kill him.

The Marines have about 175 EOD men in posts over the world, and their record is 100 per cent no casualties.

They are light-hearted men, but there's no fooling when it comes to the job. They treat each bomb as though it were the first one they ever disarmed.

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