

YEAR 2020
2ST Edition

Saving LIVES

HUMANITARIAN DEMINING



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INGENIEROS



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Saving LIVES

HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

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INDEX

Pp. 01



EDITORIAL

Pp. 06



PRESIDENT DUQUE

Pp. 08



GR. SEPULVEDA COING

Pp. 08

COLOMBIA DECONTAMINATES INFOGRAPHIC RESULTS

Pp. 12



HUMANITARIAN DEMINING ENGINEERS BRIGADE, **UNSTOPPABLE FORCE TO DECONTAMINATE COLOMBIA** FROM ANTIPERSONNEL MINES.

Pp. 13



HUMANITARIAN DEMINING: **A PRIORITY FOR APC-COLOMBIA AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Pp. 14

POSSIBLE MINE RISK EDUCATION

Pp. 15



COCONA CROP, **A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE** IN FIELDS FREE OF SUSPICION OF ANTIPERSONNEL MINES

Pp. 17



EXPORT-TYPE **GRANADILLA IN CLEARED LAND**

Pp. 20



DOZENS OF FAMILIES **HAVE RETURNED TO SOUTHERN TOLIMA** THANKS TO HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

Pp. 22



HUMANITARIAN DEMINING **A COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE** OF PENNSYLVANIA, CALDAS

Pp. 24



EDUCATION **WITHOUT FEAR**

Pp. 27



DEMINERS **PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION** OF THE ORINOQUÍA

Pp. 29



COLOMBIA AND BRAZIL, UNITED FOR A PURPOSE

Pp. 31



NON-TECHNICAL STUDY, **ESSENTIAL CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT** HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

Pp. 34



PRADERA, VALLE DEL CAUCA, **MUNICIPALITY THAT FACES ANTIPERSONNEL MINES**

Pp. 38



SOLDIERS **DRESSED IN BRAVERY CLEAR UP** ANTIOQUIA

Pp. 40



THE FIRST **DEMINED TOWN IS A BENCHMARK OF SECURITY** IN EASTERN ANTIOQUIA

Pp. 42



PLATOON BILINGUAL, **HUMANITARIAN DEMINING**





EDITORIAL

By: Cr. Hoover Yarley Ríos Román
Commander 1st Humanitarian Demining
Engineers Brigade.

Four years have passed since soldiers have sworn to clear the national territory of anti-personnel mines, a mission that we face with professionalism and heroism for the lives of Colombians every day.

Although this year has been difficult for many people, from the beginning the deminers of the National Army saw it as a challenge that would approve the love and service for others.

Thus, despite the pandemic facing miles of nations, including our beloved Colombia, humanitarian demining operations are being sustained to prevent dozens of compatriots from being new victims of explosive devices.

Today I thank the protagonists of this mission, my demining soldiers, those who have intact their conviction, their principles and values to act with heroism and defeat the enemy that seeks to obscure the progress and tranquility of families and regions.

It is noteworthy that the unrestricted support and trust of the institutional leadership has been essential so that despite the circumstances in our country, the men and women who carry out humanitarian demining remain firm in their work.

In turn, international cooperation through donations and knowledge exchanges has strengthened the projection of the work carried out by each demining soldier.

I reaffirm my commitment and my soldiers to continue saving lives and contributing so that the return of thousands of families to their homes is a reality.

We are sure that humanitarian demining will continue to be the main axis so that the inhabitants can make legitimate use of their lands and, hand in hand with the State, undertake productive projects that strengthen the local and regional economy.





IVÁN DUQUE MÁRQUEZ

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

One of the most heinous practices of the terrorists who have wanted to subdue Colombia is the installation of antipersonnel mines. Thus they have wanted to protect their violent actions and their criminal economies.

These mines have caused thousands of civilian victims and members of the public force. They have been a great source of pain for many Colombian families. But that horror has not defeated us and we have faced it with the capabilities and professionalism of our National Army.

We are proud to say that the 1st Humanitarian Demining Engineer Brigade is the strongest, most sophisticated and capable of the world, and the greatest adaptability it has to face the challenges of humanitarian demining.

We are proud of the preparation and professionalism of the more than 5,000 men and women that make up this brigade and the explosives and demining group of the Marine Corps, which have achieved the liberation of millions of square meters of suspected contamination by antipersonnel mines.

In two years of our government we have reached 129 municipalities free of antipersonnel mines, of which the National Army has cleared 121. In addition, it has intervened other 91 municipalities, cleared 3,481,864 square meters and neutralized 514 explosive devices.

Many lives have been saved thanks to humanitarian demining, a dangerous task that opens roads to the country and allows it to turn a fearsome page of horror. All Colombians are immensely grateful to our Army for this work that frees us from the terror of the violent.

That is why we will continue to support them. For the 2020, 2021 and 2022 terms, we will strengthen the national capacity for humanitarian demining with a budget of more than half a billion pesos.



The work continues, but we are reassured to know that it is in the hands of women and men trained to do it, and that they do it with great patriotism and love for Colombia. The entire country supports them and carries them in its heart.





HUMANITARIAN DEMINING ENGINEERS BRIGADE, A NATIONAL CAPACITY FOR THE PROGRESS OF COLOMBIA

By: Brigadier General Omar Esteban Sepúlveda
Commander Engineers Command

Colombian soldiers are highly trained to face any mission that requires the deployment of capabilities in order to generate stability and progress in the most vulnerable regions, over time we have been modernizing adjusting the work to operational changes, being the branch of Military Engineers a fundamental pillar for the development of the nation.

In recent decades we have witnessed how the enemy hand has intimidated the civilian population in order to contain the offensive operations of the troops using the indiscriminate use of antipersonnel mines, as a reliable example of the cowardice of the illegal armed groups who usually, given the inability to confront our men, they use these explosive devices, violating Human Rights and transgressing the postulates of International Humanitarian Law.

Colombia, aligned with the Ottawa Convention of 1997, where it refers to the prohibition of the use, storage, production and transfer of antipersonnel mines and their destruction, actively participates in this international initiative that seeks to end the suffering caused by these explosive devices.

A great effort is currently being made to clean up the land suspected of contamination by antipersonnel mines. The National Army delegated this mission to the Engineers branch who since 2005 make up the Brigade of Humanitarian Demining Engineers No. 1.



This titanic work deserves all our respect and admiration to those who bravely assume the responsibility of destroying these deadly traps in a controlled manner, it is not an easy task, considering that many of these artifacts were planted by terrorists randomly and without any control.

Among the tasks of Humanitarian Demining are Non-Technical Studies, which are defined as a tool designed to measure the degree of affectation of an area supported by a thorough investigation and interviews with the community in order to georeferenced and micro focalize the areas. Once the information is consolidated, progress is made in the Technical Studies allowing the delimitation of dangerous areas or areas with suspected mines.

We have been making progress and thanks to the experience of our Colombian soldiers, clearance techniques such as Canine Demining and Mechanical Demining have been developed, strengthening our

reaction capabilities in the event of this type of explosive material event.

Our challenge in 2020 is to decontaminate 1,800,000 square meters free of suspicion of antipersonnel mines, thanks to institutional and operational leadership we have managed to intervene 1,430,475 square meters in nine months, which brings us even closer to the goal stipulated by the National Government.

Since 2005, our deminers have destroyed 4,100 antipersonnel mines, 975 unexploded ordnance and 1,455 improvised explosive devices that were removed from the Colombian fields, allowing the peasants the legitimate use of the land, contributing in a positive way to their economy.

To date, 212 municipalities have been handed over to Colombians free of suspicion of contamination with antipersonnel mines. This important result

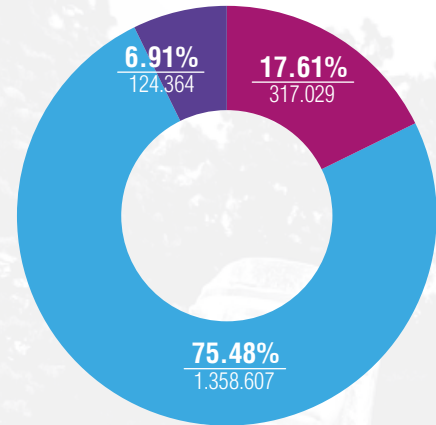
reflects the commitment of the soldiers who make up the Humanitarian Demining

The plus of this special unit of Military Engineers is to "save lives", in the same way, the reconstruction of the social fabric and community development, for this reason we have been able to advance in the municipalities that are free of suspicion of mines supporting strategies articulated with Public and private institutions that have strengthened the development of 17 productive projects throughout the nation, encouraging the community to work the land in order to generate trust and stability.

Always motivated by the smile of the little ones and the tranquility of the families who have returned safely to the fields free of suspicion of mines, the Military Engineers will continue working tirelessly to safeguard the integrity of Colombians, building paths of progress and peace.



Total m² Interveneds



■ m² Clear ■ Missing Goal ■ m² Released ENT

Municipalities free of suspicion of anti-personnel mines

GOAL
32 MUNICIPALITIES
TODAY WE DELIVER 12 MUNICIPALITIES



Results 2020

Total Intervened Area
1.482.971 m²

Clear Area Daily
9.487 m²

Clear Area Accumulated
1.358.607 m²

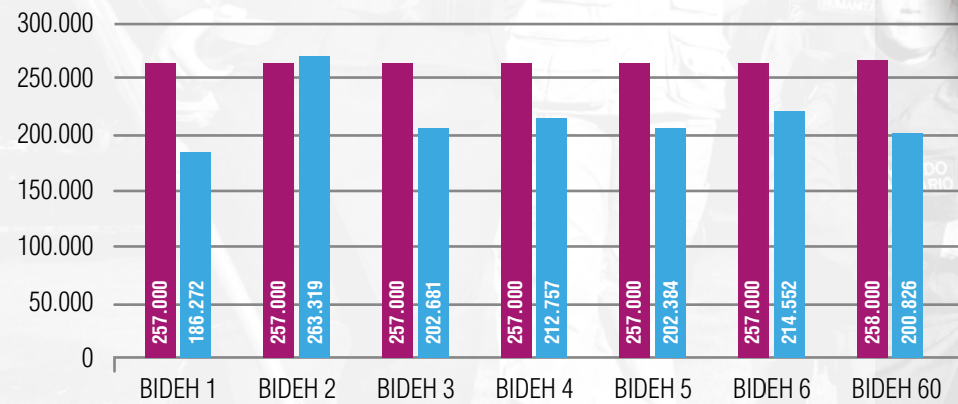
Released Area ENT
124.364 m²

Anti-personnel mines
88

Ammunition without exploding
26

Explosive Devices Improvised
02

m² Intervened 2020



Historical results 2005-2020

Total Intervened Area
1.482.971 m²

Area Clear
9.487 m²

Area Released ENT
9.487 m²

Anti-personnel mines
9.487 m²

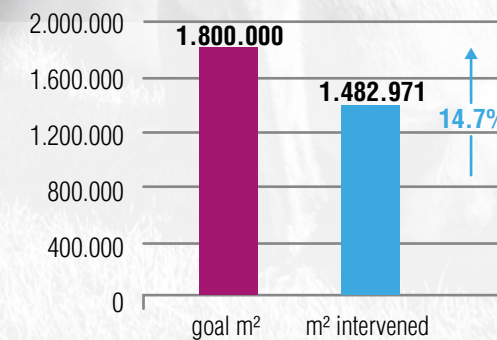
Ammunition without exploding
9.487 m²

Explosive Devices Improvised
02

Divisions Results

DIV	MUNICIPALITIES ASSIGNED	MUNICIPALITIES INTERVENTION	M² CLEARED ACCUMULATED	M² CLEARED DAILY	M² RELEASED ENT	EVENTS INVESTIGATED	DESTRUCTION OF AE			MUNICIPALITIES DELIVERED LSCM
							MAP	MUSE	AEI	
01	6	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
02	15	14	92.734	368	22.318	44	3	0	0	3
03	12	8	214.552	1.165	0	18	10	5	2	0
04	7	5	65.426	94	0	29	2	1	0	0
05	21	21	364.158	2.181	80.779	92	24	6	0	2
06	9	9	278.809	1.683	0	46	33	10	0	0
07	14	9	199.541	937	21.267	18	15	3	0	7
08	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FT-CO	3	1	143.387	3.059	0	0	1	1	0	0
TOTAL	90	73	1.358.607	9.487	124.364	252	88	26	2	12

Goal Advance



- 01 Amazonas 1 Municipality
- 02 Caquetá 1 Municipality
- 03 Putumayo 2 Municipalities
- 04 Nariño 5 Municipalities
- 05 Cauca 8 Municipalities
- 06 Huila 12 Municipalities
- 07 Tolima 16 Municipalities
- 08 Valle de Cauca 10 Municipalities
- 09 Quindío 4 Municipalities
- 10 Risaralda 6 Municipalities
- 11 Caldas 9 Municipalities
- 12 Cundinamarca 38 Municipalities
- 13 Meta 9 Municipalities
- 14 Guanía 1 Municipality
- 15 Casanare 5 Municipalities
- 16 Boyacá 11 Municipalities
- 17 Santander 20 Municipalities
- 18 Antioquia 26 Municipalities
- 19 Córdoba 2 Municipalities
- 20 Sucre 5 Municipalities
- 21 Bolivar 4 Municipalities
- 22 Magdalena 7 Municipalities
- 23 Atlántico 2 Municipalities
- 24 Cesar 6 Municipalities
- 25 La Guajira 2 Municipalities



HUMANITARIAN DEMINING ENGINEERS BRIGADE, UNSTOPPABLE FORCE TO DECONTAMINATE COLOMBIA FROM ANTIPERSONNEL MINES.



By: Miguel Ceballos Arévalo,
High Commissioner for Peace.

The purpose of humanitarian demining is to free land from contamination from both antipersonnel mines and used unexploded munitions, to restore communities their right to use the land in full freedom and to save thousands of lives from this hidden enemy.

Due to the dynamics of the illegal armed groups in Colombia, antipersonnel mines are artifacts that do not have specific installation patterns or with any georeferencing to locate them, which is why demining efforts become a long-term process carried out by properly trained and trained expert people.

Decontaminating the Colombian territory is a daunting task that requires the courage, dedication and sacrifice of deminers in their mission to clear rural areas of antipersonnel mines.

In this context, the 1st Humanitarian Demining Engineers Brigade of the National Army is one of the largest national capacities in the world, with around four thousand men and women, who day by day clear the affected territories inch by inch.

Currently, Colombia has a total of 407 municipalities declared free of suspicion of antipersonnel mines, 211 liberated by the Humanitarian Demining Brigade through the destruction of 1,036 explosive devices that cleared 1,772,680 square meters of Colombian territory.

During the government of President Iván Duque, the largest handover of a president in the country was made: 129 municipalities free of suspicion of antipersonnel mines, equivalent to 31 percent of the total number of municipalities liberated since 2012.

Despite the period of isolation due to COVID-19, the Brigade of Humanitarian Demining Engineers did not stop its mission against antipersonnel mines, guaranteeing the development of humanitarian demining operations in the rural areas of 66 of the 91 municipalities it has assigned, complying with all established biosafety protocols to prevent spread. These clearing tasks were carried out away from the civilian population, since the work areas are in places with difficult access.

During this period, the virtual training course for promoters in Education on the Risk of Antipersonnel Mines, 17 members of the Demining Brigade, who will contribute to reduce the accident rate caused by these explosive devices by raising awareness and appropriating safe behaviors, successfully completed. aimed at communities at risk.

In this way, the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Brigade continues to contribute to the progress and development of the communities, generating peace with legality and helping to make the ideal of men, women and children a reality to return to their lands free of antipersonnel mines.

HUMANITARIAN DEMINING: A PRIORITY FOR APC-COLOMBIA AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



By: Ángela Ospina de Nicholls

Guaranteeing communities the right to use their lands and free mobility in their paths and fields is our main objective with the eradication of antipersonnel mines. In Colombia, we have come a long way with the elimination of these artifacts in more than 158,830m2 of the national territory and although this figure is very encouraging, we still have numerous challenges to end this practice that goes against International Humanitarian Law.

Humanitarian demining is a global challenge that we must not face alone. Colombia is part of the 162 countries that signed the Ottawa Convention in 1997 with the aim of ending this practice that has affected, in its great majority, innocent civilians. This sum of wills of the international community has allowed us to promote humanitarian principles and make better and greater efforts to clean the mined areas in our country in an efficient and coordinated manner.

Alliances with the public-private sector and philanthropy are a sign of solidarity and cooperation among nations that seek to end this scourge. A great example of these agreements is the donation made by the Howard F. Buffet Foundation, of which USD 38,120,000 was earmarked for humanitarian demining and whose contribution has made it possible to improve the response capacity of the Humanitarian Demining Brigade, through the provision of ambulances, motorcycles, improvement of communications and facilities, canine training, first aid kits and training, among others.

During the last three years, APC-Colombia has coordinated and channeled contributions from

countries and international public and private organizations such as Canada, France, Switzerland, Italy, Norway, USA, New Zealand, the United Nations Fund, JICA, the Embassy of France in Colombia, SDC, USAID, AICS, the New Zealand Embassy and Global Affairs Canada, among others. In the last three years, the total value of contributions for international cooperation destined to humanitarian demining amounts to USD10,810,050.39. In 2018, we obtained support for a value of USD 3,745,654; In 2019, international contributions reached USD 5,165,863.00 and in 2020 we have managed contributions for a value of USD 1,898,532.57.

It is also important to highlight the role of civil organizations that have joined this fight, such as: The Halo Trust, H&I, Danish Deminig Grup (DDG), Campaña Colombiana Contra las Minas (CCCM), Attex, APN and Humanicemos DH, an organization that it was born of the peace process dedicated to the eradication of antipersonnel mines.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the Humanitarian Demining Brigade of the National Army for their great work done in this task and in restoring the conditions of well-being, mobility and security for many Colombians.

From the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation, APC-Colombia, we will continue working to guarantee the protection of life, ensure the human rights of Colombians, build development, progress and well-being, and comply with the peace policy commitments legally.



COMPONENTS OF ERM

WHAT IS EDUCATION AT THE RISK OF MINES ANTIPERSONNEL?

It is a set of processes aimed at the civilian population, that seeks to sensitize and promote a culture of safe behaviors, to reduce the risk to a level where people can live safely and create an environment where economic development and social freedom from the limitations imposed by the presence of explosive devices.

DISSEMINATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

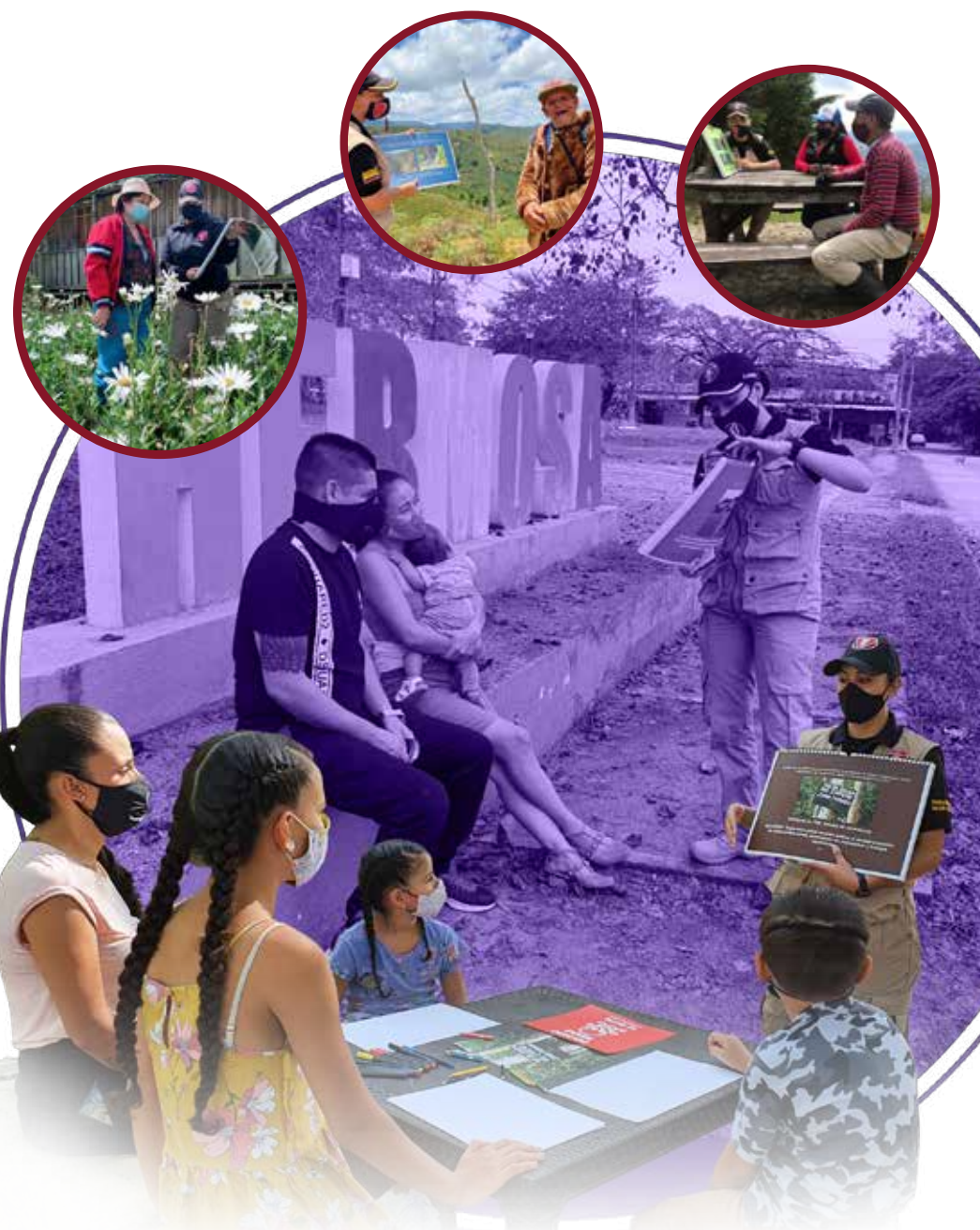
One-way communication activities aimed at reducing the risk of damage caused by MAP / MSE / TE, by sensitizing people and communities about such risks.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

They are all educational and training activities aimed at reducing the risk of damage, caused by MAP / MSE / TE by raising awareness of the threat that these represent, for people and communities. By promoting changes of behavior; imparting and acquiring knowledge, attitudes and practices through teaching and The learning.

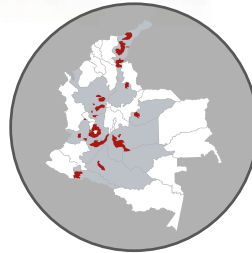
RISK MANAGEMENT COMMUNITY

IT IS the comprehensive action against MAP / MSE / TE that must strive for capacity building local, through participatory and empowerment processes that are materialized in management plans of municipal, school or other risks.



MUNICIPALITIES IN INTERVENTION

2.846.514
projected population to benefit



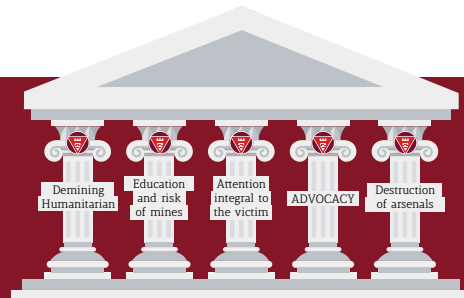
17 Facilitators

13 Departments

41 Municipalities



PILLARS OF INTEGRAL ACTION AGAINST ANTI-PERSONAL MINES (AICMA)



COCONA CROP, A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE IN FIELDS FREE OF SUSPICION OF ANTIPERSONNEL MINES

By: Second Sergeant. David Ramos Cuesta
1st Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion



Ninfa Herrera, governor of the settlement K + G + fene Murui de la Montañita **Source:** Ninfa Herrera

The development of humanitarian demining work in the different areas of the department of Caquetá has allowed the acceptance of the soldiers of the 1st Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion in the peasant and indigenous communities, making them active participants in a number of activities, where it has been possible to support the community processes that are carried out in each territory.

This has facilitated in a positive way, the tasks concerning to humanitarian demining, favoring the search for alternatives that allow the implementation of sustainable projects that are viable in areas free of suspicion of antipersonnel mines.

In order to recover the production and commercialization of exotic fruits from the Amazon region, different native fruit species were taken into account where different points of view were analyzed, such as the geographical location of the areas where the fruit will be grown, its conservation depending on the climatic incidences and transport, resistance of the plant to the characteristics of the soil and the possibility to replicate it in other areas of the department.

Thanks to the interaction with the communities, it was possible to know an Amazonian exotic fruit called Cocona or also scientifically known as Solanum Sessiliflorum, and although it is not very common to find it due to its little commercialization, the soldiers undertook the task of investiga-





ting about of this fruit, its methods of propagation, cultivation, trade and its properties with the purpose of producing it in the forest nursery of the Demining Battalion, to be donated in the implementation of productive projects and support the communities where it has been intervened with techniques of humanitarian demining.

Ninfa Herrera, representative of the Murui - Muina people, Utitoto, describes Cocona as a medicinal fruit that helps regulate blood pressure among other properties, *“this fruit is consumed to lower blood sugar, fight anemia, protect kidneys, liver improvement. Consumption of Cocona also improves hair texture, and I reveal this as a beauty secret, because indigenous women are not used to having hair treatments in beauty centers or salons”*.

Knowing the benefits and how important this fruit is for the peasant and indigenous communities of Caquetá, the demining soldiers undertook the task of carrying out a pilot planting plan for Cocona, planting 100 seedlings in El Bethel farm, located in the Providencia village of the municipality of El Paujil, Caquetá, owned by Dalia Monroy Serrano, who is very grateful, because in these times of pandemic it has been very useful for domestic consumption.

“In the future I see it as a sustainable alternative, since this fruit does not require investment

costs for its cultivation and maintenance, because it adapts very well to the soil conditions of our department, the only fertilizer that is implemented is the application of organic compost such as dry leaves and animal excrement. The truth is that this fruit has awakened my motivation due to the results obtained. I hope to continue counting on the deminers and the supply of more seedlings from Cocona to market it for the support of my family, since I am the head of the household”.

Meanwhile, Diego Castro, an agroecologist engineer and who created a company called Pura Amazonía based in Florencia, Caquetá, tells how he became interested in this product: *“I took on the task of using the pulp of this fruit to produce cocona nectar, jam, cookies and sweets, which I sell in the region where they have had a very good acceptance by consumers”*.

With this type of initiative, the military people contribute to sustainable economies without affecting the environment.



Sowing of Cocona plant Vereda Providencia el Paujil finca el Bethel **Source:** Slp Brayan Niño Díaz

EXPORT-TYPE GRANADILLA IN CLEARED LAND

By: Second Sergeant. Victor Riveros.
2nd Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion.

Between 20,000 and 30,000 granadillas are sold monthly by a family that has benefited from humanitarian demining.



More than 600 men and women work in the south of Tolima to give back to hundreds of families their lands, their dreams and to generate inclusive projects that will make a great harvest of land.

Thirty years ago, Alirio Ramos, a farmer from Tolima, was filled with the utmost sadness, fear, and the thought of a fatal episode in which perhaps his life could end.





“In the 90s, the extinct FARC, stubborn with the indiscriminate planting of antipersonnel mines, intimidated the town of Gaitania in the municipality of Planadas, during the armed conflict that the country was experiencing. I lived in fear, it was difficult to walk through my properties, work on them, antipersonnel mines took over my mountain, the environment that generated my family’s livelihood, we all found ourselves frustrated just thinking that by going to the mountain, we could lose one of our limbs or why not, life itself”, Alirio recounted with tears on his eyes, telling the episodes that he had to experience when he heard the roars of the explosions when some of his cattle fell on mined land.

He also states that it was very difficult for him to report or seek help from humanitarian demining due to possible intimidation of illegal armed groups.

THE CHANGE

Quando llega el desminado a finales del año 20When demining arrived at the end of 2017 in the south of Tolima, specifically in the Gaitania district of the Planadas municipality, the farmer had the opportunity to speak with Sergeant Zarabanda, who was leading the Non-Technical Studies team, and told him what had happened on his property and the prohibitions that armed groups made to his family like not to walk through the pastures.



Upon hearing the farmer version, the Sergeant scheduled the visits and after analyzing the area, marking them with tapes and a danger sign, they indicated the risk that traveling through that place represented.

After several months of work, the area was declared and handed over as territory free of suspicion of antipersonnel mines.

“A radical change to be able to return to my properties, the sterile land was strengthened again by demining, from there the granadilla seed grew, a productive project in which I participate with my family, including my children. Thanks to the heroes of humanitarian demining, I can cultivate totally organic granadilla, obtaining approximately 300 boxes, which gives me the ability to distribute to the special district like Bogotá and from there export it through commercial fruits S.A. for consumption to the whole community. My lands are prosperous, fears and suffering are left behind, today I project myself as a sustainably entrepreneurial man. Thanks again to the soldiers of the 2nd Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion, my admiration and respect, to them I owe to dream

again, to have the opportunity of a good future for my family, in this paradise that God gave me, now through inclusion and planting, I can offer other food products such as beans... and all those that will come”, says Alirio, who sells between 20,000 and 30,000 thousand granadillas monthly.

On the other hand, Alejandro Dávila Hernández, secretary general and government of Planadas, highlights the work of the military and adds: *“In history it was never intended to reach the attention and proximity of the community for the soldiers, their work and help, Now the peasant is not afraid to go through his fields, to recognize them and to cultivate them, in the same way, tourism increases due to demining, you can feel the desire to come to see Planadas, it was a lost paradise, today thanks to his great work we are recovering it. It has also made it possible to develop products that generate productivity in territories of antipersonnel mines”.*

In this way, it is considered that most of the return of the Tolima peasants is due to the decontamination work carried out by the National Army deminers.





DOZENS OF FAMILIES HAVE RETURNED TO SOUTHERN TOLIMA THANKS TO HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

By: Lieutenant. Jesika Molina Figueroa
2nd Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion

The South of Tolima is demined thanks to the coordination that has been generated with the communities affected by explosive devices and the local and regional authorities of each of the municipalities where this heroic work is carried out.

Particularly in 2008 in the San José de las Herosas village of the municipality of Chaparral, Tolima, the Aponte Méndez family decided to abandon their properties due to the threats generated by the illegal armed groups that were passing near their lands and also for fear of entering their premises and being victims of anti-personnel mines; "We went to Bogotá in order to save the lives of my children and to be able to get better job opportunities and with that to recover what we had lost ..." comments Mrs. Solaida Aponte, owner of the property.

Although the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion No. 2, in 2017 began humanitarian demining work in the municipality of Chaparral, Tolima, where it identified dangerous areas suspected of explosive devices; On September 18, 2018, the search began to eliminate the hidden enemy that had haunted that family and others for ten years.



Photo captured by Cape First Quintero Castiblanco Jonathan during the return to the beautiful farm of the Aponte Méndez family in the San José - Chaparral path. February 2020.

The news that the demining had reached the municipality spread very quickly in all the paths and entities of the local administration of the municipality, in this way, the Aponte Méndez find out that their property was taken into account to be decontaminated of these artifacts, generating the hope of being able to return home again.



Photo captured by Cape First Quintero Castiblanco Jonathan during the return to the beautiful farm of the Aponte Méndez family in the San José - Chaparral path. February 2020.



Although there is still a part of the property that is being intervened by humanitarian demining, in which the soldiers have destroyed three explosive devices and decontaminated 32,081 m² of territory, it is been two years since Solaida she returned home.

"One afternoon we realized that the abandoned and uninhabited house was becoming different, it was a family that came to stay in their humble home, quickly and as a function of us we made contact with this family to report the work that was being carried out in their property. Thanks to the demining, without a doubt the lady reflected a deep joy, with this I confirm once again that I am proud to be a military and contribute to the communities of this way," says Wilson Ramírez, national demining supervisor who is present at this point.

On the other hand, Fredy Medina, president of the Community Action Board of the San José village, **assures that approximately 3% of families have returned to their homes** and there is an increase in the planting of agricultural products in the region, thanks to demining.





HUMANITARIAN DEMINING A COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE OF PENNSYLVANIA, CALDAS

By: TE. Brayan Viveros
3rd Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion

Since December 14, 2017, the 3rd Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion began the intervention process on land with suspected antipersonnel mines in the departments of Santander and Caldas.



Photo captured by: Professional Soldier. Rincón Chavarro Alex

Particularly in the municipality of Pennsylvania, Caldas, to date there are 138,248 m², 14 antipersonnel mines destroyed and 95 sectors investigated.

“It is an honor for us as soldiers committed to Colombia to give a piece of tranquility by telling to this beautiful municipality full of drive, that we are still here and we will not be calm until we deliver the entire municipality and thus ratify our commitment to the Colombian people. He is proud to be the spearhead in returning smiles to our children, giving peace of mind to the humble peasant who brings food to our tables every day.”



Photo captured by: Professional Soldier. Rincón Chavarro Alex

says demining soldier Ismael Cabrera Velasco, who verifies the quality process of the meters cleared by his colleagues .

For the head of the Pennsylvania government, Cristian Camilo Giraldo Gallo, the municipality has had changes in the perception of security, *“For me it is very gratifying to be able to extend a greeting of thanks for all the support that they have given us from the social part of demining if Although its mission is to carry out humanitarian demining work as its name indicates, it is to recognize the high impact that the presence of a group that is highly interdisciplinary with many additional activities that helps the social development of the communities where they have their impacts are much better. This is represented by the fact that the community already feels a much greater perception of security due to its presence, in addition to this, it feels an accompaniment from some State institution, an accompaniment that is well known is carried out in an exceptional way, since the people who make up the demining battalion with which it is present in the municipality have a high level of commitment to the communities and are very supportive of the agricultural work”.*

In particular, for every Colombian soldier to hear the gratitude of a people with the work they carry out regardless of the inclement weather or the remoteness of the land to be cleared, and fulfilling the mission hand in hand with the people, is gratifying, says a deminer .

In that part of the country, the commitment of the uniformed men goes beyond the clearing of land, they also carry out comprehensive action activities such as deliveries of groceries to the vulnerable community, recalling the feeling of solidarity that characterizes the soldier. In turn, they carry out actions in the care centers for the elderly, expressing respect and commitment to those who were a vital part in the development of the country, who, being parents, brothers and children, formed the present generation.

They also develop recreational activities and delivery of snacks to rural schools in the villages of Guacas, Quebrada Negra and Las Colonias, among others, generating well-being for adults and children.

The humanitarian demining in that municipality has also had the opportunity to show its commitment to the planet and the environment, thus planting 3,850 trees that will contribute to better air quality.

The members of this Demining Unit work to be agents of change and have an important role in the stories that will be told to new generations, where men and women dressed in blue forged a better country on behalf of the National Army, materializing the motto: *“Our mission is to save lives.”*



Photo captured by: Professional Soldier. Rincón Chavarro Alex





EDUCATION WITHOUT FEAR



By: Sergeant First Class
Carlos Andres Ramirez,
4th Humanitarian Demining
Engineers Brigade



Photo captured by: Professional Soldier. Franco Vaquero,
4th Humanitarian Demining Engineers Brigade

For many years, the armed conflict that exists in a large part of the national territory has left Vistahermosa, Meta, as the municipality with the highest rate of affectation with accidents due to explosive devices; hitting the communities that live there, being the people who live in the rural sector the most affected by this problem.

According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace, the department of Meta is one of the territories with the highest number of accidents with explosive devices, reporting 1,140 victims. It is estimated that most accidents occurred in Vistahermosa, a municipality that has 370 victims of explosive devices up to date, being the first place at the national level of municipalities with the highest degree of affectation.

This is how the minors were immersed in war with the siege and the indiscriminate planting of antipersonnel mines by the illegal groups around schools of the area, generating fear in the community, which chose not to send their children to educational institutions and abandon their territories because of the fear of suffering an accident with antipersonnel mines.

“When I was younger I was studying at the school in Costa Rica, one day I went out to play with some classmates, next to the school we saw some jars and we started playing with them, that is all I remember, when I woke up I was in Villavicencio hospital with bandaged hands,” says Néstor, a victim who had one of his hands amputated by an antipersonnel mine.

Like these stories there have been many that people of this municipality have lived; Some sadder than others, they have even left fatal victims in this community.

However, as of 2017 with the arrival of the humanitarian demining of the National Army to the municipality, the situation has already been changing, the decontamination of two schools that were mined in the Costa Rica and Termales villages has been done. Similarly, investigations are continuing in three more schools, in which it is suspected there may be contamination with antipersonnel mines.

“I am very grateful to the humanitarian demining for delivering the school free of antipersonnel mines because every time I look at the sector where they worked I start to think that we were walking on the mines and I was less than 20 centimeters from stepping on one, which could have caused a tragedy, perhaps losing an arm, losing one’s life,” says Professor Tony Leison Trujillo, from the Costa Rica school.





Thanks to the work that has been done by the 4th Humanitarian Demining Engineers Brigade, people have been encouraged to return to their homes and children to schools, achieving an increase in student attendance of 5%, as reported by José Ignacio Serrato, secretary of education of Vistahermosa.

Also Jhon Jairo Ibarra Caicedo, mayor of the municipality adds: *“The arrival of the National Army with the humanitarian demining has been a blessing and a part of tranquility for us and the community, since they have managed to end the fear of the mines that we had in some schools, with this we can make the titling of the properties where the schools are located and then be able to develop projects to improve the education of our children”.*

“Gone are those days where we could not go out, in many places where we traveled we found mines or ammunition that were dumped after the confrontations that the armed groups had; Those times are very sad and it was very complicated,

many people died or were ‘mochas’ because of these things”, says Flor Alba Palma, with a little sadness reflected in her eyes.

Currently, in the department of Meta, 222 explosive devices have been destroyed, six were destroyed in the Costa Rican and Termales schools and the liberation of more than 790,000 m² that were suspected of contamination by explosive devices, similarly, investigations of events involving antipersonnel mines are being carried out in other educational facilities.



Photo captured by: Professional Soldier. Franco Vaquero José / Vistahermosa Meta. With the Beginning of the Humanitarian Demining Works, the Communities and Children Returned to their Homes and Schools.

DEMINERS PROMOTE THE CONSERVATION OF THE ORINOQUÍA

By: SS. Miguel Cañas Diaz
non-commissioned officer BIDEH No. 4



Photo captured by: Professional Soldier. Tamayo Piedrahita Yoeber Vaquero José / Vistahermosa Meta, With the support of the Government of Meta and the Community, Soldiers from the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion No. 4 Carry out a Planting Day of 6000 Trees in the Maracaibo Village.

Over the years, the deforestation of the Colombian jungle has increased significantly, according to the environmental authorities this is due to the indiscriminate felling of trees, the planting of illicit crops, illegal mining, fires, illegal roads and the usurpation of land, among other causes.

The numbers in the department of Meta are very worrying, in the last seven years more than 200,000 hectares of forests have been deforested, which 123,000 have occurred in the last three years, says Andrés Felipe García Céspedes, director of the Corporation for Sustainable Development Special Management Area of La Macarena, Cormacarena.

Under this problem that places the department as the second nucleus of deforestation at the national level ranking, the National Army through the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion No. 4 in coordination with the government of Meta, Cormacarena and the local authorities of Vistahermosa, Mesetas and Granada towns, they have been developing the reforestation of the devastated areas with the planting of more than 17,000 seedlings, which seek to mitigate deforestation in the south of the region.

“The National Army, through the Mayor Artemisa operation and the ESUS environmental recovery plan, aims to protect the environment through the reforestation of the areas that have been affected





by the phenomenon of deforestation, and under this commitment the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion No. 4, has made an alliance with the governments of Meta and Cormacarena to build a forest nursery inside the facilities of the Military Canton Ariari, which has a capacity to produce more than ten thousand seedlings that will be planted as a compensation measure in the areas where humanitarian demining intervention is carried out and to reforest those areas where the communities require them”, adds Lieutenant Colonel Genaro Castaño Gómez, commander of the Battalion.

With the forest species, the deminers have managed to recover 32 hectares, restoring the wildlife, the capture of carbon dioxide, CO2, and the production of oxygen.

Diana Méndez, environmental engineer of the Humanitarian Demining Brigade, thinks that the success of the environmental strategy in southern Meta is due to the technical capacity of the Demining Unit for the production of native forest species in nurseries and the support provided both to environmental authorities and to the communities in the planting days.

Nelson Pardo Hernández, a teacher at a Vista-hermosa school, says: “The activities we have done with humanitarian demining have been very good, since they have accompanied us in the planting of these 3,000 trees here in the village and also are helping us to recover the water sources, the students of this educational institution see them as an example for the care and preservation of the environment”.

The environmental initiative led by the National Army deminers has allowed nearly 100,000 trees to be planted this year in eight departments.



COLOMBIA AND BRAZIL, UNITED FOR A PURPOSE

By: Second Lieutenant. Lizeth Guio Oficial 5th Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion.

Some of the people may remember Brazil and Colombia every time we talk about soccer, but the truth is that now the Colombian territory is witness of how the military of the two nations work to eradicate the invisible enemy.

Since the agreement of understanding on demining matters was signed three years ago, the Brazilian soldiers guide the internal quality process of the humanitarian demining operations carried out by the Colombian soldiers.



Magazine in the Administrative Area in the Sector of the Municipality of Tuluá, Valle del Cauca; by Mr. CT. RAFAEL NUNES PEREIRA; Photo historical record Brazilian commission TC. Luis Enrique Santos Franco advisor to the head of MIADH (Mission of Instructors and Advisors in Humanitarian Demining).

Enlistment process of the UDH 17 (Humanitarian Demining Unit) by Captain RAFAEL NUNES PEREIRA of the Brazilian Army, Municipality of Tuluá. Photo taken from the historical record Brazilian commission TC. Luis Enrique Santos Franco advisor to the head of MIADH (Mission of Instructors and Advisors in Humanitarian Demining).



With their preparation, the officers verify, analyze the data, and evaluate the daily tasks in dangerous areas and municipalities affected by the possible presence of Antipersonnel Mines (MAP), Unexploded Munitions (UXO) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).





Participation of Mr. TC ANTONIO VAZ FREIRE FILHO in a Technical Meeting with BIDEH3, by videoconference, in which the results of the performance of the Military Organization were presented. Photo historical record Brazilian commission TC. Luis Enrique Santos Franco advisor to the head of MIADH (Mission of Instructors and Advisors in Humanitarian Demining).

Specifically, in the departments of Huila and Putumayo, tools such as planning, execution and evaluation of humanitarian demining operations have been implemented with the quality required by international and national standards, under the guidelines that outline approved operational procedures.

Another of the strengths of the quality management in that area of the country are the human resources that are available, having supervisors with experience in demining operations for more than three years and the needed knowledge to guarantee performance and stable processes, allows leaders and deminers to develop their functions successfully.

This is how the work carried out by soldiers from the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion No. 5 has been optimal, allowing the highest number of meters cleared with the least amount of non-critical non-conformities by the external monitoring component of the Acción Integral Contra Minas Antipersonal, AICMA, and the Organization of American States, OAS.

It is important to mention that in these two departments, the monitoring of internal quality management by the Brazilian Army is carried out by

Captain Elvis Barbosa de Lima, who, even though having a course on quality management and operational procedures in humanitarian demining directed by GATI-CO, Group of Inter-American Technical Advisors in Colombia, he had to be accredited by the OAS.

Barbosa highlights the work of the demining soldiers as a fundamental part of humanitarian demining since they are the ones who risk their lives every day, confronting antipersonnel mines to save the life of thousands of people and deliver land free of suspicion of mines to the population of the different territories.

“The work in the 5th Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion is being very rewarding, although of great responsibility. In Brazil there are no real humanitarian demining operations, while in Colombia the scourge of the mines has already been fought for almost 20 years.” He also assures that participating in this fight fills him with pride and allows him to exercise the functions for which he was assigned to the Colombian territory.

In short, international cooperation has played a key role in the development of humanitarian demining activities not only in Huila and Putumayo, but also at the national level ranking.

NON-TECHNICAL STUDY, ESSENTIAL CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

By: Captain. Yoel Ernesto Romero Parra
6th Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion.



In Colombia, there are factors that have slowed or diminished agricultural, social, educational and commercial development. There are also some communities that do not have the peace of mind of moving freely without exposing themselves to any kind of risk.

One of these causes is the fear that the inhabitants of the regions have regarding antipersonnel mines. Speaking about the department of Valle del Cauca, this problem has been reduced remarkably since the arrival of the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion No. 6, thanks to the work carried out by the Non-Technical Study Teams that reach places that are difficult to access to investigate the events that are register in the Information Management System for Mine Action, IMSMA.





The job of these teams with the support and accompaniment of the mayors, presidents of community action boards and owners of the properties where the accident or incident occurred has been essential.

The men and women that make up the Non-Technical Study Teams have a fundamental and suitable profile to carry out their role with attitude; they carry out field visits to identify the presence of direct and indirect evidence and thus define the dangerous areas and confirmed dangerous areas for contamination. It should be noted that once the study is supervised by the external monitoring component AICMA-OAS, humanitarian demining begins in the areas.

According to soldier José Arley Muñoz Plazas, who works as a non-technical study assistant, this job is one of the most important, *“We must work hand in hand with the community, in case they are aware of possible areas contaminated by explosive devices. In addition, we must support the leader in socializations by taking notes of the information provided by the sources and make an excellent photographic record in order to develop a good investigation, I feel very safe doing my job with the great feeling that everything was done very well by handing over the land cleared of mines, where you can see on the peasant faces the joy of being able to use their lands again.”*

To date, with the work of the Non-Technical Study Teams, ten municipalities have been delivered free of suspicion of antipersonnel mines in Valle del Cauca, such as: Sevilla, Bugalagrande, El Cerrito, Guacarí, La Cumbre, Cali, San Pedro, Calima, Riofrio and El Aguila, which were intervened by the Diamante company, made up of 97 soldiers, three officers and 56 non-commissioned officers.

Jorge Eliecer Rojas, mayor of the municipality of Bugalagrande, states that: *“Thanks to the humanitarian demining that gave us the municipality in 2019, the direct beneficiary population of the sector was 9,100 inhabitants, there are 324 requests for land restitution, favoring 83 families, reducing to 100% the victims of explosive devices and the displaced population. A link of victims was generated, we have also advanced a good investment in productive projects such as organic coffee that is in development, we hope to benefit the population of the Ceilán district, in the same way, projects coordinated and supported by NESTLE SA and POSTO-BON. Livestock and coffee are already thriving in this municipality thanks to the support of the Land Restitution Unit, managing to benefit 58 families.”*



Photograph: Professional soldier. José Luis Gallego Ascanio

With testimonies like these, it can be confirmed that humanitarian demining contributes satisfactorily to the decontamination of explosive devices in the municipalities of Valle del Cauca, so that the population can enjoy their goods and resources without any restrictions, allowing the peasants to achieve peace of mind. walking, working, studying, playing, and performing different activities of daily living in each of their properties.

The local authorities of other favored municipalities affirm that the changes generated in their territories after being declared free of contamination by explosive devices, have great facility for the population to be productive, competitive and can cover the large national markets, since they previously had the obstacle of not having large amounts of land in optimal safety conditions due to the mines, but today it is possible thanks to the work of all the members who make up the demining.

Now, with the support of the **deminers, seeds of life are sown, resulting in self-sustaining projects, promoting development in communities**, since without a doubt the economy of a country depends on the work done by farmers.





PRADERA, VALLE DEL CAUCA, MUNICIPALITY THAT FACES ANTIPERSONNEL MINES

By: Captain. Anderson Ramirez Castañeda
6th Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion

Photo captured by: CT. Parra Puerta Georgy / Soldiers from the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion No.6 make sightings of the lands freed from the danger of suspicions of antipersonnel mines, in this way productive work is achieved in these lands of the Pradera Valle del Cauca municipality.



ment of Nariño in 2010 to the Bolo Blanco sector in Pradera, due to the armed conflict in that region he decided to go out with his wife and young son of only one year old, what he did not imagine was that where he would arrive the armed situation was equal or worse, however, he had to face that scenario, so little by little he organized himself on a small plot of land where he built a house with the sweat on his brow and with the help of his wife he managed to get ahead. *“Day by day I received constant visits from armed groups who told me that it was forbidden to leave my land limits because the sector was mined,”* says Alex, who with great concern and impotence had to obey these threats in order to avoid accidents for him and his family.

After a few years, with the presence of the National Army, security in this sector was restored. However, the biggest problem persisted, the anti-personnel mines were still installed in these properties and their question was how to solve something as dangerous as these explosive devices?

The Battalion of Humanitarian Demining Engineers No. 6, arrived in Pradera in 2017 starting tasks in the Bolo Blanco sector and later in the sectors



Now it has been four years in which the **Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion No. 6** has been intervening in the **Pradera municipality** to restore tranquility to the inhabitants of this beautiful place in Valle del Cauca.

Photo captured by: CT. Parra Puerta Georgy / Recolección de Mora, in support of small farmers in the Pradera municipality, thus contributing to the development of farmers in the region.

Approximately 15 years ago, in the municipality of Pradera, Valle del Cauca, the planting of antipersonnel mines was the daily bread, the inhabitants of that area lived with distrust, they were afraid to leave their homes and walk through their own crops due to the anguish generated by the explosive devices installed by illegal armed groups that committed crimes in the area. However, as time went by, the units of the Public Force arrived, offering a respite to the population, giving them an environment of security and tranquility.

Reaching the top of the mountain taking the road to the Bolo Azul sector, approximately 2,300 m s. n. m, there is the administrative area of the Demining Unit made up of soldiers, the same ones who once camouflaged themselves to ensure the safety of the locals in the different Colombian jungles and now in these settlements they exchange weapons for metal detectors and the camouflaged, to a blue uniform with demining vests and visors to combat the enemy in Pradera, the antipersonnel mines.

To soldiers, this job is a new way of life, as well as for the residents who have a chance to start over, together they are a single team that have managed to intervene 168,553 m² of 467,074 m² that are carried throughout the department .

Don Alex as they affectionately known Alexander Muñoz, a peasant who came from the depart-



CP. Osorio Cervantes Iván José / The soldiers of the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion N6 carry out community development activities in the Mora crop owned by Mr. Alexander Muñoz in the Bolo Blanco district of the Pradera municipality in 2020.





Professional soldier Pacheco Guerra Elio Enrique / In the development of operations with manual demining technique in the village of Bolo Blanco in the municipality of Pradera Valle del Cauca.

known as Bolo Azul, Retiro and Potrerito with the sole purpose of saving lives and starting the threat of mines in this area; Alex was the first interested party and although at first he thought that perhaps not giving all the information would be the right thing to do, he decided to leave his fears behind and shared his situation; From that moment on, humanitarian demining has given him its unconditional support to solve the problem.

According to what is stated by the inhabitants, in townships such as these belonging to the Pradera municipality there are approximately 40 peasant families who for 25 years fought and remained on their lands, remaining in the midst of the crossfire between armed groups and the Public Force.

Today with the work that has been done by demining, these paths are in charge of supplying the municipal head with food such as long onion, potato, trout and dairy products, in addition to this, export products such as purple passion fruit or commonly known as Galupa.

Apart from Alex, some peasants from the rural area gave their land for the organization of demining camps. The villagers sometimes meet to drink coffee that boils while the smoke is lost in the mist that hides the mountain, and they offer them to the soldiers, in gratitude for their participation and collaboration in the mission that they carry out day by day.

“The demining has also provided us with first aid with cases of sickness in the upper area, they arrive with their ambulance and transfer them to the Pradera sector, this year we had that support generating trust with the region, as well as media activities environment, where they helped us and contributed with the planting of trees in the townships of La Ruisa, Bolo Azul and Arenillo”, indicates Claudia Beatriz Lucumí Hurtado, secretary of government of the Pradera municipality.



Although at the Bella Vista farm, owned by Alex, three antipersonnel mines have been destroyed in the course of this time, he already uses his land to plant blackberries, vegetables, also for livestock, as he will soon sell products such as yogurt and cheese.

“There is still a lot of work to be done, we have many dangerous areas that we still have to intervene,” explains First Corporal José Camacho Londoño, leader of humanitarian demining, referring to those fields that are still mined and that are enclosed with stakes, danger tape and red signs that warn of the risk involved. It is expected that soon they will be able to deliver the entire municipality free of contamination from antipersonnel mines to the community.

THE ACTUAL PRADERA

“The peasantry has been able to return with confidence to do their jobs and their agricultural work, tourism, sports and cultural activities have increased, for example, the return to heaven where more than 1000 mountaineers attracted by our landscapes, give thanks to the cleaning up humanitarian demining allowing them to develop this type of sporting activities in the best way... it has restored confidence in our territory, therefore for us the presence of humanitarian demining has been a blessing”, says Justino Sinisterra Sinisterra, Mayor of Pradera.

The actual Pradera is totally different, since the productive projects of the inhabitants have grown considerably and the tranquility that we lived now was not felt many years ago.

Photo: Soldiers from the Humanitarian Demining Engineers Battalion No.6 accompany Mr. Alexander Muñoz in his blackberry cultivation where they remove weeds in order to control the growth of the plant and thus produce good quality fruit.





SOLDIERS DRESSED IN BRAVERY CLEAR UP ANTIOQUIA

By: SM Andrés Fernando Loaiza
BIDES N° 60

Wearing blue uniforms, soldiers from the 60th Demining Engineers Battalion are working to regain tranquility and generate progress in the Antioquia region.

In order to clear and free the fields of Colombia of antipersonnel mines, these heroes exchanged their pixelated uniform, their campaign equipment and the thunder of the rifle for the blue suit of almost ten kilos, a metal detector, a visor and a vest with armor that minimize the impacts an explosion can generate.

The clearance task carried out by the demining soldier requires a high degree of physical, mental and emotional condition that will allow him to intervene his path inch by inch for approximately eight hours a day, verifying that there is no risk. Sometimes, due to the topography of the land, it forces the demining soldier to do it from the kneeling position.



Photo captured by: Cape first. Salinas Collazos heiner Enrique, professional soldier who performs the TDM procedure, (manual demining techniques), Acuña Ojeda Amín, La Candelaria village, Concepción municipality, Antioquia department, demining soldiers who left their pixelated uniform to dress in blue, using their detector of metals to liberate the lands of terror from the antipersonnel mines in Colombia, so that the peasants return their productive lands.



Always aware that taking the first step to enter the work area puts his own life at risk, the deminer carefully applies each of the operational procedures learned with the firm conviction that his well-executed task will allow the population to regain confidence to be able to work their lands, travel the fields again and enjoy their benefits.

This is how the soldiers who make long journeys to reach lands contaminated with antipersonnel mines, being a commitment of faith in the cause, their persistence and determination to carry out the mission entrusted, have cleared more than 2,000,000 m² in the department of Antioquia, locating and destroying 800 antipersonnel mines in the region where 23 municipalities enjoy security and tranquility because they have no presence or suspicion of antipersonnel mines.





THE FIRST DEMINED TOWN IS A BENCHMARK OF SECURITY IN EASTERN ANTIOQUIA

By: SS. Fabian Lopez Gutierrez
Warrant Officer BIDES No. 60

After eight years of being declared free of suspicion of antipersonnel mines, San Carlos is synonymous of progress and tranquility in Antioquia.

Out of the 125 towns that make up the department of Antioquia, San Carlos, located in the Eastern subregion, was one of the most affected towns by violence, especially by antipersonnel mines since 172 victims were register due to explosive devices.

When it was believed that there was no solution to this problem, on August 6 of 2009 the Demining Engineers Battalion No. 60 was created, a unit with a unique specialty in Colombia, destroy and exterminate the terror of the fields, best call antipersonnel mines.

This is how a group of brave soldiers, wielding a metal detector and risking their lives in the face of a silent, invisible and treacherous enemy, entered to San Carlos, on January 20 of 2009, starting a manual demining work in La Mirandita village, place where 10 artifacts were destroyed.



Photo captured by: Mr. sv. Perafan Albear Julio, using Manual Demining Techniques, a detection procedure, with which the work was carried out in the village of La Mirandita, on March 13, 2012, thanks to this work today the fields are more productive.



There are 76 villages and two townships that make up San Carlos town, a territory that was traversed inch by inch by deminers to restore peace and hope to those communities.

“San Carlos is one of the towns that experienced the armed conflict to the hardest a few years ago, where groups outside the law installed anti-personnel mines in different villages of our town, in our territory. Today thanks to the work that has been done by the humanitarian demining, we are a territory free of suspicions mines and we project ourselves as a safe territory”, says Mariluz Quintero Duque, mayor of San Carlos.

To clear 227,674 m², the expertise and professionalism of the uniformed personnel was need it, who also ended the action of 91 antipersonnel mines.

Sergeant First Class Julio Perafán, a noncommissioned officer who was part of the decontamination of San Carlos town, says: *“When we got to those sidewalks, all the houses were abandoned, at night not a light was seen. Today after 11 years I returned to the same place, I stopped at the same spot and now I can see many inhabited houses, cultivated fields, now at night you can see a lot of lights, we call them the lights of hope”.*

The amazing work of humanitarian demining made San Carlos to be history on March 13 of 2012, when it was declared the first town free of suspicion of mines.





PLATOON BILINGUAL, HUMANITARIAN DEMINING

The 1st Humanitarian Demining Engineers Brigade of the Colombian National Army, strengthening its international projection, has created a bilingual platoon made up of officers, NCOs and professional soldiers with a knowledge of a second language, which aims to export capabilities, skills and experience acquired in the development of humanitarian demining operations. There are no borders to this courageous and life-saving work.





**BRIGADA DE DESMINADO
HUMANITARIO**

