

Photographs of Minefield Areas in Egypt

Western Desert Problems

Each region of Egypt has special technical problems. The principal technical problems in the Western Desert are:

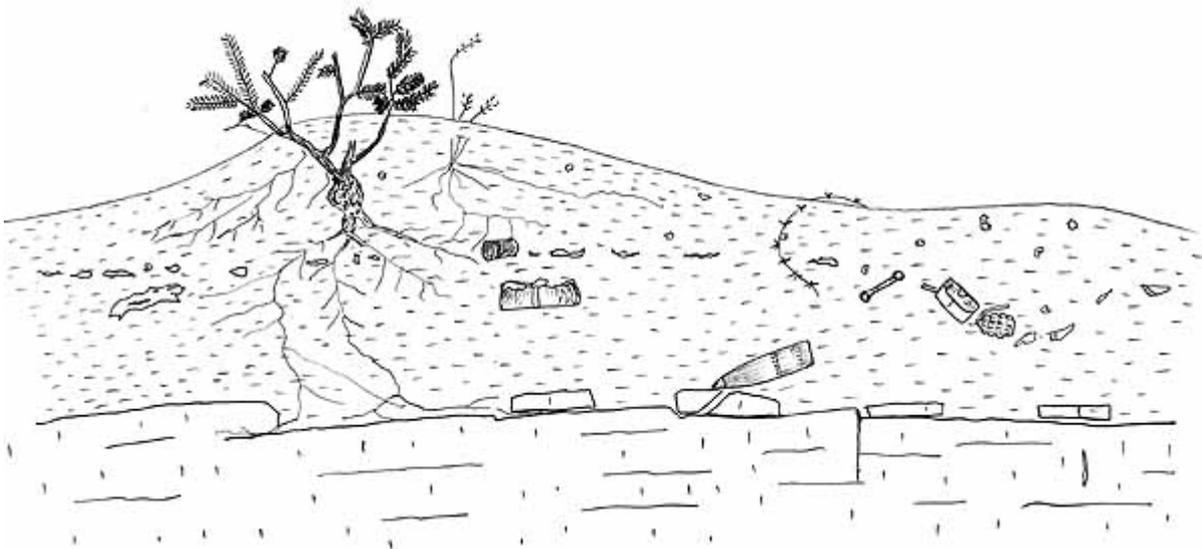
Wind blown sand burying mines and fragments up to 2 metres deep in places, though mostly less than that.

High fragment density in many areas.

Age of mines - up to 60 years.

Unknown, or partially known location of minefields.

Many, large and sometimes unstable UXO's distributed across area, many UXO's considered to be more dangerous than the mines.



Drawing: Typical ground structure in Alamein area. Windblown sand surrounds small bushes in shallow soil over limestone bedrock. This shows typical demining problems in the Western Desert: mines lie close to bedrock, and UXO's lie in minefield area. Extensive frag from fighting, lying on what was the surface in 1941-1943, generates many false alarms. In places, the sand has drifted to depths of up to 2 metres.



Photo: eg24-19a: The back end of a large British bomb can be seen inside the hole. The bomb was dropped on a British position heading south. The bomb was discovered during routine mine clearance in the area. It is awaiting an EOD team to destroy it in place, and the evacuation of the adjacent bedouin camp.



Photo: eg24-27a: Minefield being cleared. Each red flag denotes the position of a mine, all AT mines in this instance. Each mine has been located and removed from its position and placed alongside each hole. This can be a dangerous procedure as some mines have mechanisms which, if badly corroded, can activate the mine with the slightest movement.



Photo: eg24-21a: Close up of hole showing lower layers of compacted sand which can easily be rubbed away by fingers. The upper 10 cm of sand is loose. All this sand would blow away under appropriate conditions.



Photo: eg24-24a: British Mk 5 AT mine removed from its hole.

Photo: eg24-18a: Close up of bomb in hole showing compacted sand with small limestone pebbles embedded in it.



Photo: eg24-22a: Mk 4 AT mine removed from hole. The depth of sand above the mine was approximately 320mm here. Normal metal detectors should have no difficulty locating this kind of target.



Photo: eg24-23a: Typical small bush. On the downwind side sand has built up in the bush. The prevailing winds are from the north west.



Photo: eg24-25a: Close up of Mk 5 AT mine showing advanced corrosion.



Photo: eg24-28a: Hole where a large fragment was found. This is one of very few such holes, indicating that there were few false alarms in searching for mines here.



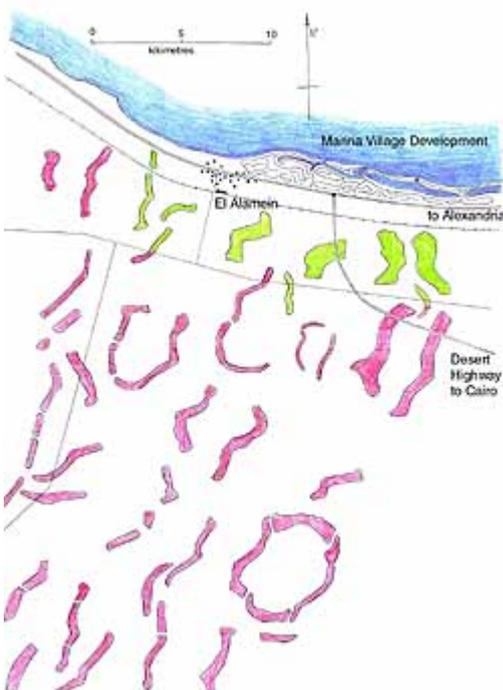
Photo: eg24-29a: Metal spring (found by deminers). The white flag behind the red flag indicates the edge of the minefield boundary.



Photo: eg24-30a: New irrigation canal under construction through mined areas. The government wants to release land here for irrigated crops, using underground water. Note the blown sand indicating that sand is very mobile here under the right conditions.



Photo: eg24-31a: Col. Mahrous, Commanding Officer, Engineers Brigade responsible for demining Alamein area, exchanging gifts with author.



Drawing: Map of area drawn from memory. Shapes are indicative only of minefield records which are partly misleading because of the limited accuracy of those records. UXO (and some mines) lie scattered across entire area so the entire area has to be cleared.

