

FACTUAL ENTERTAINMENT

EXPLOSIVE - MEN ON A DANGEROUS MISSION

6 x 45' (GER, ENG subs)

Every year, thousands of unexploded ordnances are recovered and defused in Germany. They are remnants of war and everyday experts risk their lives.

In Germany, around 100,000 unexploded ordnances are still buried in the ground, 75 years after the end of the war. About 5,000 are recovered and defused every year – a job that is becoming increasingly dangerous due to bomb deterioration. The munitions experts never know what exactly to expect underground. They risk their lives every time they recover and defuse an explosive bomb. We accompany the experts on their dangerous and explosive missions.

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1. Imminent Danger

In Schwentinental near Kiel, exploratory teams come across an unexploded ordnance. Within just two days, several hundred task forces have to secure the area so that explosive ordnance disposal expert Alexander Matera can render the World War II bomb harmless.

2. On a Precarious Mission

The Kiel exploration team has found an unexploded ordnance that has lost none of its danger even after decades. In order not to take any risks, the experienced firefighters do not rush into action. To disarm the dud, the defusers have to separate the explosive device from the detonator. If they make a mistake, the bomb will go off.

3. Dangerous Legacy under Water

Explosive ordnance disposal underwater poses special challenges. In the North and Baltic Seas alone, there are around 1.6 million tons of World War II munitions and more than 300,000 tons of chemical warfare agents. Because no sensor technology can help under water, the explosive ordnance disposal divers have to rely entirely on their senses.

4. Danger at the Construction site

Experienced explosive ordnance disposal experts suspect that wartime munitions are lying in the ground along a planned highway. Before they can start drilling, the firefighters examine the surface with metal detectors and magnetic technology. The clock is ticking, because construction work can't begin until the explosive ordnance disposal experts are finished.

5. Danger in the Combat Zone

In Lower Saxony, explosive ordnance disposal experts are systematically searching for munitions from the Second World War in areas that were once hard-fought over. The munitions experts never know in advance exactly what is waiting for them underground. The experienced explosive ordnance disposal experts are not always able to defuse a bomb directly on site. Particularly feared are treacherous long-life fuses, which normally can neither be safely defused nor transported and therefore have to be detonated on site.

6. Danger in the Field

A farmer near Kiel believes there is an unexploded bomb in his field. The 86-year-old was still a child when the aerial bomb landed there. For decades, the explosive device was forgotten until the man remembers it again after almost 80 years. A first look at the drop site shows: The farmer could be right. So the demolition experts take a closer look.