

U. S. Mine Training Aid Set No. 2, Japanese

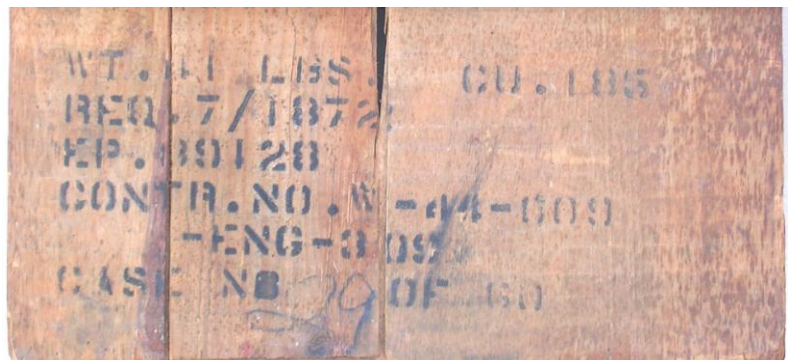
By Dan Larkin

In the late 1970s, my Dad and I acquired this “Mine Training Aid Set No. 2, Japanese” for \$35. Parting with that amount of money was not as easy one might expect nowadays, as \$35 then would buy a pretty nice rifle or even a pistol. Anyway, over the years as we began concentrating on collecting Japanese pistols, the training mine set was eventually relegated to a closet where it has sat buried for at least two decades. Recently, we rescued it from hibernation, and it has piqued our interest again just as it did over 30 years ago.



The “Mine Training Aid Set No. 2, Japanese” consists of an unfinished wood box with metal hinges and latches holding several U. S.-made reproduction Japanese explosive devices for use as training aids. The box exterior measures approximately 39” long by 13” wide by 6” high and is liberally marked as to its contents. Everything weighs around 40 pounds. The interior is compartmentalized and holds the various training aid devices and their components. This particular training mine set retains the original descriptive poster glued inside the lid showing the set components and their marking translations. It also has its original manual, War Department Technical Bulletin TB ENG 79, which provides detailed information about the mine set and its use as a training aid. As is stated in the manual, the training mine sets were intended “to familiarize troops with the recognition, arming, disarming, and disposal of Japanese mines.”

This training mine set is marked “Case No. 29 of 60” which implies 60 of the sets were produced. However, the “authorized distribution” listing in the TB ENG 79 manual on page 4 indicates that at least 592 sets were available for distribution.



Major wartime training centers at Fort Belvoir, Camp Claiborne, Fort Leonard Wood, and Fort Lewis were each assigned at least 100 of the training mine sets. One of the authorized distribution organization locations, "Sch; AGF Repl Depot," was assigned 60 units of which this particular training mine set may be one.

The below image of the training mine set interior shows how well the training aid components are organized inside the wood box. The following Japanese training mine devices are included: Type 93 anti-tank mine, magnetic mine, Type 3 land mine, yardstick mine, and Type 97 hand grenade (which could be used as a mine). Various training aid mine fuzes are also included in the set along with the TB ENG 79 manual. A diagram affixed to the lid of the training mine set shows the components and a translation of the various markings and tags for the individual training aid devices. The mine set training aid components retain their paper inscription tags which are translated on the mine set inside lid diagram. There are two unused compartments in the box – One below the training Type 97 hand grenade, and one to the right of the training Type 3 land mine fuze. A comparison of the training mine set lid image showing the removed elements and of the training mine set image in the TB ENG 79 manual shows that this particular training mine set is complete.



Additional images below and on the next two pages show details of the mine set training aid components, diagram, and TB ENG 79 manual.

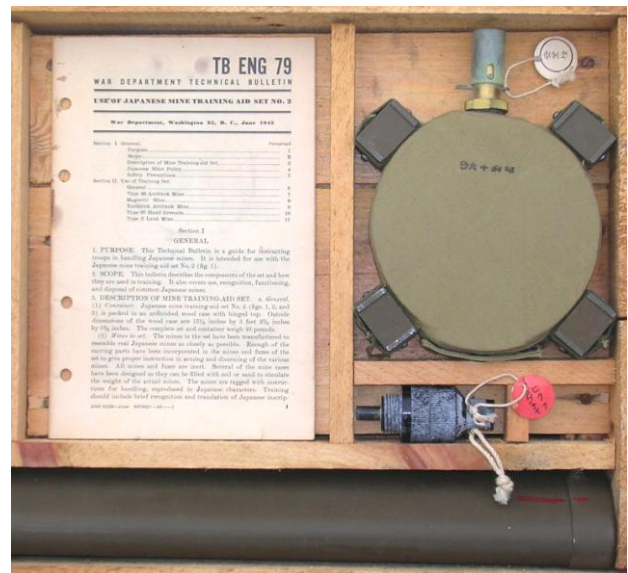
The training Type 93 anti-tank mine, its attachment rope, and its training fuze are placed on the left side of the box. The training yardstick mine is placed at the bottom of the box and runs its full length. Four training fuzes for the training yardstick mine are placed just below the training Type 93 anti-tank mine training fuze.

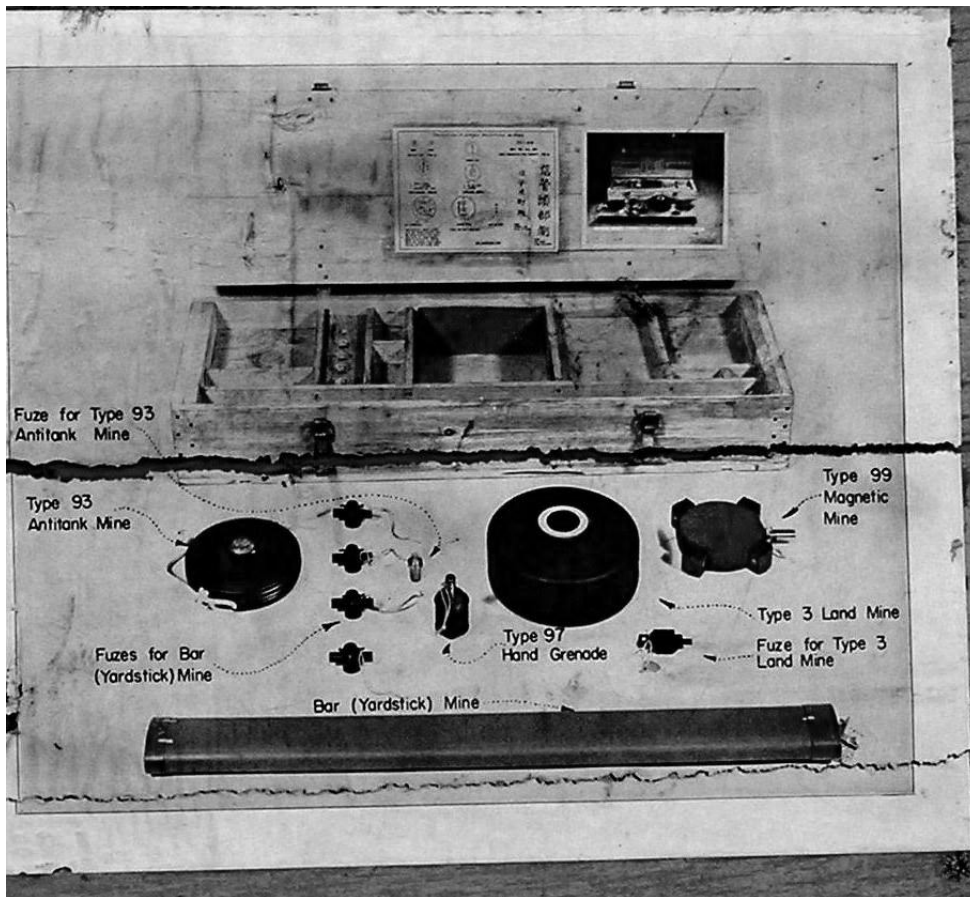


On the right side of the box is the training magnetic mine with its training fuze installed. The training Type 3 land mine training fuze is just below the training magnetic mine. Space for the War Department Technical Bulletin TB ENG 79 manual is provided in the box between the training Type 3 land mine and the training magnetic mine.






In the center of the box is the training Type 97 hand grenade and the training Type 3 land mine.








TRANSLATIONS OF JAPANESE INSCRIPTIONS ON MINES

 SAFE
 SAFE
ANTITANK MINE, TYPE 93

 1. DELAY ACTION
 2. 4-2 SECONDS
 3. 2 SECONDS (OFF TIME)
HAND GRENADE, TYPE 97

昭和十六年
 SHOWA ERA 16th YEAR
 ARMOR PENETRATION MINE, MAGNETIC
 TYPE 99


SAFETY PIN
 1. DO NOT PULL
 2. DANGER
LAND MINE, TYPE 3


PAZ ATTENTION
 1. WHEN BURYING REMOVE SAFETY WIRE AND INSERT BURYING PLUG. USE AFTER COATING WITH DOPE.
 2. WHEN USING IN CLOSE COMBAT, THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT USING THE CHARGE AFTER MERELY PULLING THE SAFETY WIRE.


SAFETY WIRE
 (READ THE BOX CAREFULLY)

BURYING PLUG
 FUZE BOTTOM PART SIDE (OF MINE)

BAR (YARDSTICK) MINE
 FUZE TOP PART SIDE (OF MINE)

信管頭部側
 信管底部側

tions. An accurate translation of all Japanese characters appearing on tags is glued to the inside of the packing case top (fig. 1).

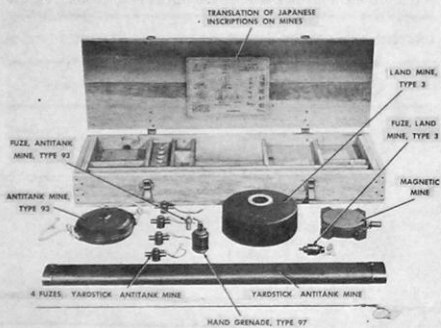


Figure 1. Components of Japanese mine training-aid set No. 2.

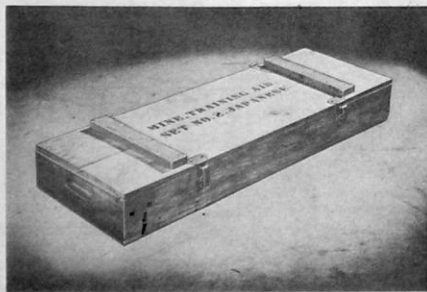


Figure 2. Packing case for mine training-aid set.

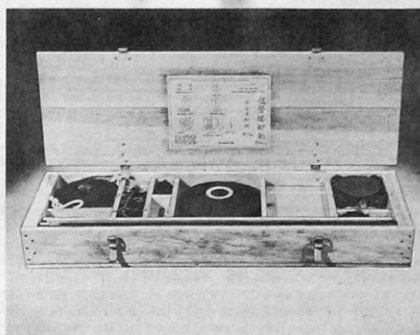


Figure 3. Arrangement of mines in case.

b. Components of mine training-aid set. (1) Correct nomenclature and stock numbers of the component parts of the Japanese mine training-aid set No. 2 are listed below:

Set No. 586-02, mine, training-aid, set No. 2, Japanese

Nomenclature	Unit	Stock No.	Quantity
Mine, training-aid, Japanese:			
Antitank, type 93	ea NX	04-6498, 500-100	1
Armor-penetration, magnetic, type 99	ea NX	04-6498, 500-200	1
Bar, yardstick	ea NX	04-6498, 500-300	1
Hand grenade, type 97	ea NX	04-6498, 500-500	1
Land, type 3	ea NX	04-6498, 500-600	1

(2) Authorized distribution of the set is as follows:

T/A No.	T/O & E No.	Name of organization	Basis of distribution	Quantities
AGF T/AS		Sch. AGF Repl Depot	RTC	60
20-2		Div Engr Bn or Squadron	Co.	3
20-2		Engr C Bn (nondiv)	Co.	3
20-2		Except in Div Engr Bn or Squadron or Engr Bn (nondiv)	Troop	1
		Fort Belvoir		100
		Camp Claiborne		100
		Fort Leonard Wood		100
		Fort Lewis		150
		Engineer School		50
		Granite City Engr Depot		15
		Columbus ASF Depot (Engr Sec)		10

c. Variations between live and dummy mines. (1) Type 93 antitank mine (fig. 1). The mine case is the same in both live and dummy mines, except dummy has a filler plug in the bottom to permit filling the case with soil or sand. In some sets, the dummy mine case may be about 1/4 inch deeper than the actual mine. The pressure plug and safety tab are identical to their Japanese counterparts. The fuze is identical in appearance to the actual fuze, except that the bottom of Japanese fuze is recessed.

(2) Magnetic mine (fig. 1). In appearance, this mine and fuze are identical to the actual Japanese mine. However, the magnets are dummies and the canvas case contains wooden blocks to simulate the explosive charge.

(3) Yardstick antitank mine (fig. 1). This dummy mine is identical in appearance to the actual mine. It varies from the actual mine in that the explosive charge is simulated with plaster-of-paris blocks, and the fuzes are made in one piece with no removable parts such as the booster and striker holder of the actual fuzes.

(4) Type 3 land mine (fig. 1). This mine varies from the actual mine only in the construction of the fuze. The dummy does not contain a striker and the detonator tube is solid metal. The fuze can be disassembled and recocked by unscrewing the two halves of the fuze body and then pushing the percussion hammer up and reinserting the hammer-release fork. All dummy fuzes have right-hand threads, whereas Japanese counterparts have been found with either right- or left-hand threads. The fuze seat is also removable for filling the mine body with sand or soil.

(5) Type 97 hand grenade (fig. 1). This grenade is identical with the actual grenade, except that the fuze, instead of containing the de-

lay train and detonator, is solid. The fuze is removable, but the plug is not.

4. JAPANESE MINE POLICY. Japanese mine technique is improving and each new operation shows an increasing tendency toward the use of land mines on a larger scale. There is little reason to doubt that land mines will become a major problem in future operations.

a. Locations. Past use of land mines by the Japanese shows that mines are most likely to be found on beaches, in open fields and airfields, roads, and cities, and around pillboxes and obstacles.

b. Tactical employment. Captured Japanese notes state that mines are to be spaced 3 to 5 yards apart in front of defensive positions in dead spaces and near wire entanglements. They are also to be employed in deflated areas which cannot be covered by small-arms fire. In addition to the standard Japanese mines discussed in this bulletin, improvised land mines including aerial bombs and artillery shells are encountered in the Pacific theater. The Japanese use all types of ordnance material and hand grenades in devising antipersonnel mines. Contrary to United States doctrine, the Japanese stress close-quarters attacks against tanks by individuals or small groups, called tank fighters. Their weapons include armor-piercing magnetic mines (fig. 1), combinations of grenades and mines, grenade clusters, Molotov cocktails, and pole mines. The Japanese use antitank and beach mines extensively as a part of their beach defenses.

5. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS. The following safety precautions should be observed when dealing with all mines:

a. Never move a mine until the mine and the area surrounding it are closely inspected. All mines may be booby-trapped.

b. Remember, shear wires requiring less pressure can be substituted for the shear wire usually found in mines. The type 93 mine fuze is issued with a 25-lb shear for antipersonnel use.

c. Do not carry the mine any farther than is absolutely necessary from the area being cleared.

d. Mark located mines so they can be avoided by other personnel.

Section II

USE OF TRAINING SET

6. GENERAL. a. Use with other training aids. The Japanese mine training set used with other mine training aids will be valuable for training troops in the handling and disposal of common Japanese mines. To familiarize troops with the recognition, arming, disarming, and disposal of Japanese mines, the mine training set should be used in conjunction with graphic training aids, film strips, and

(See two previous page images) The left side of the information poster pasted to the inside of the training mine set box lid shows English translations of the individual training mine set component Japanese markings. On the right side of the poster is an image of the training mine set components removed from the box with identifying captions for each item.

The accompanying training mine set manual, War Department Technical Bulletin TB ENG 79, is dated June 1945. Images in the manual show the completed training mine set which may indicate the sets were produced near the bulletin's issuance date. One interesting comparison observation is that the training mine set image in TB ENG 79 shows only the translations portion of the information poster on the inside lid – The training mine set image is missing. The training mine set in the TB ENG 79 image may be a prototype or very early production example.

The following quote from TB ENG 79 provides a good general description of the training mine set: “The mines in the set have been manufactured to resemble real Japanese mines as closely as possible. Enough of the moving parts have been incorporated in the mines and fuzes of the set to give proper instructions in arming and disarming of the various mines. All mines and fuzes are inert. Several of the mine cases have been designed so they can be filled with soil or sand to simulate the weight of the actual mines. The mines are tagged with instructions for handling, reproduced in Japanese characters. Training should include brief recognition and translations of Japanese inscriptions.”

With an assumed late war manufacturing period and the subsequent end of hostilities, the training mine sets probably did not see much actual use as training aids. Some of them may not have been used at all, as examples are sometimes found complete and in very nice condition. At some point, an unknown number of training mine sets were relegated to the military surplus market and sold to the public. Today, they are occasionally encountered in varying stages of completeness and condition.

Individual loose training mine set components are also occasionally found – On a few occasions, a loose item has been marketed as an original Japanese example! Externally, it is difficult to distinguish between the training mine devices and the Japanese originals. So, Japanese militaria collectors should be aware of the training mine differences with original examples. (Note: Subsequent follow-up articles will compare and contrast some of the various “Mine Training Aid Set No. 2, Japanese” component inert/drill devices to actual Japanese examples.)

The “Mine Training Aid Set No. 2, Japanese” training aid set and its component items are adjunct collectibles for those of us interested in Japanese militaria. Their production served an important safety-related educational purpose for U. S. personnel in World War II. Now, they are just plain interesting as a comparable to the militaria items we collect.

(Thank you to Russ Cipolla, Dale Crabtree, and Takehito Jimbo for their comments improving this article.)