

Albert Shippen Grenade Training

We used to have to clean these grenades because they were full of grease, obviously for preservation, and then paraffin I think it was, or petrol or something in the tank. And then we were told how to carry out the striker test. You took the pin out, and then you took the lever off. The plunger went down. Of course there was no detonators in this time. And you held it against your web belt and the plunger came down. And that was to ensure that you'd got all of the grease off the grenade and everything. And when you were going to throw it, it would carry out the mechanism, because you would then put the detonator in and put the base plug back on. And the thing to remember about that is that the base plug always comes back to the thrower. And what it is it, it's a phenomena in the hand grenade. And, of course, one of the things that used to be quite funny was you had these dummy grenades, screw grenades. You took the pin out. They said "Put your left hand forward up in the air, right hand back", and the leverage you're looking at would get you more height and everything to get it over to the thing. And then you had to watch actually where it landed. That was to see if you'd thrown it properly, and also it was very important that you knew where it landed in case it was a blind. Because then someone had to go out there with a slab of amatol and a detonator and blow that grenade. You couldn't leave it in that area and you couldn't move it so it was essential. And you would see the recruits and this kind of thing, as soon as they threw the grenade would crouch down behind the sandbank and the instructor would be pulling them up saying "Look it's over there, it's over there". But you couldn't get some of the recruits up because they were just that petrified of the thing. And, of course, as they were all told, the base plug did come back to the area of the thrower so they thought they were going to get their heads chopped off.