

Worthing Pier in the News!



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SCARE OVER MINE THAT WASN'T

15.12.1961

Caused six hours of tension

STRICT safety precautions were enforced by Worthing police during a six-hour mine "scare" on the Promenade on Monday.

After a large rusty spherical object was washed ashore about 50 yards east of the Pier, just before 10 a.m., a section of Marine-parade from the roundabout to Steyne Hotel was closed to all unnecessary traffic, and pedestrians were not allowed on that stretch of the Promenade.

But when a team of mine disposal experts from HMS *Vernon*, Portsmouth, arrived at about 4 p.m. they found the "mine" was filled with sand—not high explosive.

Lieut.-Commander William McLanachan discovered that it was a practice mine. He told the *HERALD* that it was probably "laid" about 1955 and had most likely broken adrift from a position near the Isle of Wight.

Drifting in

Among the first to see the object were bearded Mr Les Fuller, Worthing's only full-time fisherman, and his wife. They saw it drift in with a strong-running sea right beneath the Pier, without hitting any of the iron supports—something they thought at the time was very lucky.

They hurried to tell Piermaster Mr J. Bonner, who had already seen it and phoned the police.

Half a dozen officers arrived and, with the aid of Mr Fuller, three of them worked in boiling wind-driven surf to rope the "mine" to groynes, to prevent it being washed out to sea again.

In charge of this operation was Sergeant Thomas Day, who had previously dealt similarly with nine mines along the coast. Sgt. Day was with bomb disposal during the war.

Traffic was routed away from that stretch of the front. Bus passengers were directed to other picking-up points.

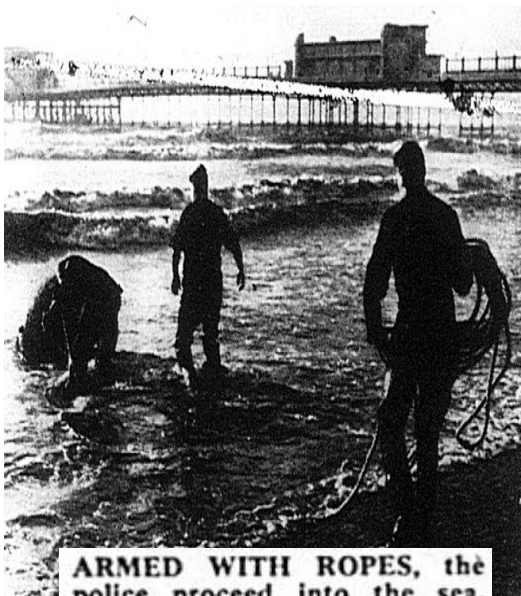
Occupants of properties facing the beach were advised to open their windows to prevent damage from possible blast.

The climax

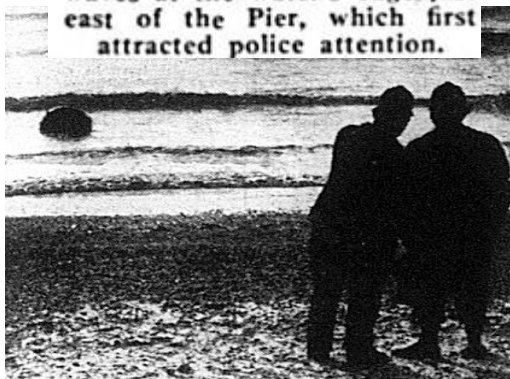
A police loud-speaker car cruised up and down the promenade warning people of the "danger." "Unexploded bombs" notices were put up. Pedestrians were kept away.

The tension reached its climax with the experts' arrival. Lt.-Cmdr. McLanachan soon recognised what he had to deal with, however, and a "stand down" was announced.

The Navy men emptied the iron casing of sand and pulled it above high-water mark for it to be taken away for salvage by the Corporation.



ARMED WITH ROPES, the police proceed into the sea. The suspicious object was hauled to a place of safe keeping until the arrival of bomb disposal experts. Top picture, a highly suspicious object, bouncing about in the waves at the water's edge—just east of the Pier, which first attracted police attention.



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