Blog 126 ~ Oh, the Things We Find

If you live on Route 518 in Blawenburg, finding things in your front yard is a common occurrence. There is a lot of traffic that moves along the road every day, and some people are careless with their fast food wrappings and beer cans. Neighbors take care of their yards, so most debris is picked up quickly.

But what happened in April 2001 was not a common event, and it took the police and the bomb squad's involvement to resolve the matter. To adapt what Jack Webb used to say on Dragnet, the tale you are about to read is true. The name and location of the event are omitted to protect the innocent. Have a blast reading this tale.

The Discovery

There had been numerous snowstorms in the winter of 2001, and the neighbor in whose yard the event occurred had his driveway plowed several times. The results were a pile of stones and mud at the end of the driveway. One spring Sunday morning, the resident decided it was time to clean up the mess. What he thought would be a routine clean-up turned out to be far more involved when he made a startling find amid the debris. His reaction was immediate, call 911.

Sergeant Lovering recalls, "I absolutely remember this 'incident'". It was at a home on Route 518, east of the Blawenburg Church. This was my very first day as Montgomery Police Department Sergeant, a sleepy Sunday morning." So he thought!

Lovering reported, "The resident had barely started shoveling the stone pile when he discovered what he thought was a grenade just under the first layer of stones in the pile."

The Initial Response

"I responded and viewed, at a safe distance with my binoculars, what appeared to be an M67 fragmentation grenade, just like the ones that I had thrown several times in the Marine Corps. The grenade still had the pin in it."

In matters like this, first responders have the responsibility to bring in help from other agencies as needed, so Lovering called in the NJ State Police Bomb Squad. "The NJSP Bomb Squad advised that they would be responding and that the neighborhood did not have to be evacuated." As a precaution, Lovering had the Emergency Medical Services and the fire department on standby at the Blawenburg Fire Department just in case the worst happened.



M67 Hand Grenade

Bomb Tech Arrival

Lovering was surprised by the bomb technician and his handling of the incident. “A bomb tech arrived in his personal vehicle (not a big fancy NJSP truck). I have to say that I was disappointed; I assumed the Trooper was going to be in his huge padded suit with the oversized helmet with a face shield, but this guy was wearing an old souvenir t-shirt and a pair of cutoff jeans that I had not seen since the 70s.”

“He casually strolled over to the pile of stones; he then picked up the grenade in his bare hands and began to shake it vigorously. I could not believe what I was seeing! The Trooper turned the grenade over and declared that the core had been drilled out and that the object was completely safe.”

The Courier News reported the incident in its April 24, 2001, edition. They said the grenade that added so much excitement to an otherwise quiet Sunday morning was just a practice grenade “with little or no explosive potential.”



A patch worn by the New Jersey State Police Bomb Squad

Happy Ending

Lovering reported, “The homeowner and the trooper had no idea how the grenade had made its way to the driveway.”

Fortunately, this incident had a happy ending with no injuries or deaths to report. It made for an exciting morning for Sergeant Lovering, the homeowner, and the curious neighbors who were likely tuned into the excitement. Sometimes, we can be thankful for what didn’t happen.

Also of Interest

1. In Spanish, *granada* means *pomegranate*, the fruit. The word *grenade* comes from the way a pomegranate explodes, scattering its seeds in all directions. Soldiers saw the relationship between the fruit and the weapon and began calling their handheld explosive devices grenades.



An exploding pomegranate

2. Grenades have been around for a very long time. Greeks had incendiary containers that could be thrown as early as the 8th century. As time when on, variations of these throwable devices were used by the Chinese (10th century), Europeans (17th century), and Americans and Germans from World War I until today.

3. The M67 grenade that was found is a hand grenade, and it is sometimes called a baseball grenade because it is round and easy to throw. After the pin is pulled, the soldier has four to five seconds to throw the grenade before it explodes.

4. There are other grenades besides hand grenades. They can be launched from rifles and grenade launchers as well. As you may have guessed, they also can be launched from drones.

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Sources

Information

Thanks to retired Montgomery Police Department Sergeant Ron Lovering for his recollections of this event.

Thanks to retired Sergeant Ken Chrusz for making the connection with Sergeant Lovering

About History: Grenades, TastesOfHistory.com, January 19, 2024.

Courier News, April 24, 2001

https://whyofwords.com/episodes/grenade

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M67_grenade

Pictures

M67 grenade—Wikipedia

State Police patch—Ken Chrusz

Exploding pomegranate – ChatGPT

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