

# Navy men end torpedo warhead threat on

## Cromer beach



- Out of the sand of Cromer beach emerges the torpedo warhead—and the explosives experts gather round.
- Then, ignominiously dragged at the tail of a vehicle, the lethal lump leaves the beach it first guarded and then threatened for 20-odd years.
- As if to emphasise that it no longer had power to frighten, visitors watched unconcerned as the warhead was removed.

**A** 1000-pound high explosive torpedo warhead, planted in the sea at the end of Cromer Pier in the last war to guard the town against invasion, was washed back to the beach and threatened the sea front yesterday.

Police evacuated the beach yesterday afternoon and prepared to clear a 500-yard area and warn people on the sea front to open doors and windows and move to the rear of their premises if the warhead had to be exploded where it lay in the sand.

Lt. Cmdr. Jack Rea and a Royal Navy team from the Portsmouth Command Bomb and Mine Disposal Unit arrived in the afternoon to inspect the explosive found 24 hours earlier by a holidaymaker. It was seen half-buried in the sand at low tide about 200 yards east of the pier.

### 200 WATCH

About 200 people who had been ordered back by police under Supt. Arthur Canham, watched from the promenade 250 yards away as the snub-nosed warhead was carefully dug from the sand. It was about three feet long and 18 inches wide and the case was of copper.

A sling was passed underneath it and it was hauled free by a cable attached to a jeep.

Lt. Cmdr. Rea decided it was safe to transport the warhead and it was loaded into a jeep and driven to the Mundesley Royal Engineers Minefield Troop headquarters with a police car escort. Then it was driven two miles along the beach to a remote spot for disposal.

Police cleared nearby cliff top fields

of farm workers and approach roads to the beach were blocked. After blowing three holes in the case of the warhead with explosive charges Lt. Cmdr. Rea and his men burned out the explosive by setting fire to it.

### WOODEN CRATE

The weapon was a first world war torpedo warhead and in the last war it was cemented into a wooden crate and laid in the sea at the end of Cromer Pier during the invasion scare. A line to it at that time would have allowed it to be detonated to prevent a landing on the pier.

Broken parts of the wooden crate and concrete were found on the beach nearby. It is thought it could have drifted from the pier end in a recent gale and uncovered by recent scouring tides.

Lt. Cmdr. Rea told a reporter afterwards: "It could have been quite dangerous if it had remained on the beach, since the older these kind of explosives become the more sensitive they are."

The copper casing of the warhead was melted by the heat of the fierce burning and a great column of black smoke could be seen rising from the beach as it burned out.

