

6-30-1997

DDASaccident085

Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database
AID

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Recommended Citation

Database, Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident, "DDASaccident085" (1997). *Global CWD Repository*. 285.
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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

| | |
|---|---|
| Report date: 19/04/2006 | Accident number: 85 |
| Accident time: not recorded | Accident Date: 30/06/1997 |
| Where it occurred: Karti Ghous Uddin, Ward 7, Kabul Province | Country: Afghanistan |
| Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?) | Secondary cause: Field control inadequacy (?) |
| Class: Excavation accident | Date of main report: [No date recorded] |
| ID original source: none | Name of source: MAPA/UNOCHA |
| Organisation: [Name removed] | |
| Mine/device: PMN-2 AP blast | Ground condition: clay electromagnetic hard residential/urban |
| Date record created: 24/01/2004 | Date last modified: 24/01/2004 |
| No of victims: 1 | No of documents: 1 |

Map details

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Longitude: | Latitude: |
| Alt. coord. system: | Coordinates fixed by: |
| Map east: | Map north: |
| Map scale: not recorded | Map series: |
| Map edition: | Map sheet: |
| Map name: | |

Accident Notes

long handtool may have reduced injury (?)

partner's failure to "control" (?)

request for better PPE (?)

request for machine to assist (?)

use of shovel (?)

visor not worn or worn raised (?)

inadequate investigation (?)

inadequate metal-detector (?)

squatting/kneeling to excavate (?)

Accident report

At the time of the accident the UN MAC in Afghanistan favoured the use of two-man teams (usually operating a one-man drill). The two would take it in turns for one to work on vegetation cutting, detecting and excavation, while the other both rested and supposedly "controlled" his partner.

An investigation on behalf of the UN MAC was carried out and its report made briefly available. The following summarises its content.

The victim had been a deminer for seven years. It was five months since his last revision course and 51 days since his last leave. The ground being cleared was in and around a building – described as "hard but suitable for prodding". A photograph showed a path between high walls with compacted clay soil. The investigators determined that the mine was a PMN-2 (from "found fragments").

The investigators determined that the victim's detector was reading constantly so he was excavating with a shovel without having marked any suspicious points. He was prodding with a bayonet to loosen the soil, then removing it with the shovel. His shovel was "destroyed/lost" in the accident.

The Section Leader said the victim had finished prodding and was removing the soil with a shovel when the accident occurred. He said the back-hoe or other modern equipment would help avoid such accidents in future.

The victim's partner said he had finished prodding and was removing the soil with the shovel when the accident happened. He said that back-hoes should be used in these sites.

The victim said he was working properly and only removing checked soil with the shovel when the accident occurred. He said the accident might have been avoided if the field work lasted less than 45 days, the rest between missions was extended from 10 to 15 days, they had better, lighter visor/helmets, and back-hoe machines were used in ruined buildings.

Conclusion

The investigators concluded that the victim had ignored the rules and excavated with a shovel while working in a squatting position. The Section Leader showed poor command and control by allowing the deminer to work in this way.

Recommendations

The investigators recommended that the Section Leader be disciplined for poor performance, the command group must stress that deminers must not dig any unclear ground with a shovel, and that, when the ground is suitable for prodding prone, the deminer must lie prone.

Victim Report

Victim number: 116

Name: [Name removed]

Age:

Gender: Male

Status: deminer

Fit for work: not known

Compensation: 300,000 Rs

Time to hospital: not recorded

Protection issued: Helmet

Protection used: Helmet

Thin, short visor

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Body

minor Face

minor Hand

minor Leg

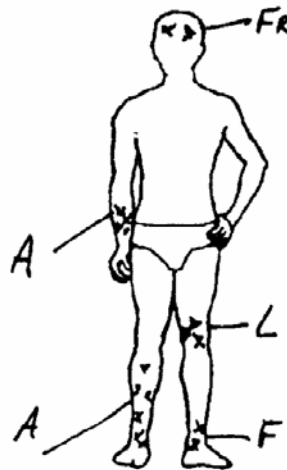
minor Shoulder

severe Eyes

COMMENT

See medical report.

Medical report



The medic's sketch of the injuries is reproduced above.

The victim's injuries were summarised as: minor injuries to right hand, left leg below knee, right shoulder, small fragments to eyes.

A photograph showed injuries to the right forearm and bandaged eyes.

The demining group reported that the victim had suffered: dust and foreign bodies to both eyes, and multiple superficial injuries to his right hand. A compensation claim was forwarded on 28th October 1997 stating the injuries as: multiple foreign bodies to both eyes and superficial facial injuries.

His vision loss was assessed at 80% on 22nd October 1997 and compensation of 300,000 Rs forwarded on 23rd December 1997.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "*Field control inadequacy*" because the victim was working in an unsafe manner and his error was uncorrected.

The victim's eye injuries imply that he was either working without a visor, or with the visor raised. The failure of the investigating team to examine this point was a failing of senior management.

It is possible that the victim did not wear the visor correctly because it was too damaged to see through properly (as was seen frequently during field visits in 1998), in which case the management's failure to provide useable equipment may represent a serious management failing.

The agency that was used to make investigations for the UN MAC (based in Pakistan) at this time was frequently constrained by lack of funds, staff and transport. At times their movement was constrained by safety concerns. As a result, investigations were frequently delayed by weeks, meaning that an assessment of the site at the time of the accident was impossible.