

6-24-1997

DDASaccident087

Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database
AID

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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 19/04/2006	Accident number: 87
Accident time: not recorded	Accident Date: 24/06/1997
Where it occurred: Chawni Village, Alikhail District, Paktia Province	Country: Afghanistan
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	Secondary cause: Inadequate equipment (?)
Class: Detection accident	Date of main report: [No date recorded]
ID original source: none	Name of source: MAPA/UNOCHA
Organisation: [Name removed]	
Mine/device: POMZ AP frag	Ground condition: bushes/scrub grass/grazing area
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

inadequate metal-detector (?)
partner's failure to "control" (?)
inadequate investigation (?)
pressure to work quickly (?)

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's experience was not recorded. It was one month since his last revision course and 56 days since his last leave. The ground where the accident occurred was described as grazing land that was "bushy with many trees". A photograph showed no trees and small bushes with leaves. The demining group claimed to have "found fragments" identifying the device as a POMZ.

The investigators determined that the victim was in a known POMZ minefield but neglected to use a tripwire feeler before advancing beneath a big bush with the detector, so pulled a tripwire with the detector head. It was recorded that there was "No damage to equipment", but photographs of a damaged Schiebel detector were included in the report.

The Sub-Commander said that the victim had used a tripwire feeler but the "heavy bushes and grass" stopped him finding the tripwire. He said the victim was careless to pull the wire with his detector head. He said that better enforcement of existing procedure would prevent repetition of such accidents.

The Section Leader stated that the deminer was working properly but was careless to pull the tripwire with the detector head. He said such accidents could be avoided if deminers were not pushed to clear quickly, if the mission length was reduced from 60 to 45 days, and if supervisors helped deminers more.

The victim's partner said that he was working properly but made a mistake when pulling the tripwire with the detector head.

Conclusion

The investigators concluded that the victim was negligent and did not use a tripwire feeler.

Recommendations

The investigators recommended that all Team Leaders and Section Leaders should ensure that deminers use tripwire feelers properly and that the site operations officer controlling the entire project must be warned for his poor performance – because other examples of the same failure to use tripwire feelers had occurred in the same command group.

Victim Report

Victim number: 118	Name: [Name removed]
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: presumed
Compensation: 33,214 Rs	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Helmet	Protection used: not recorded
Thin, short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Arms

minor Chest

minor Face

minor Hand

minor Legs

severe Hand

COMMENT

See medical report.

Medical report

The victim's injuries were summarised as: "simple" injuries to forehead and chin, "superficial" injuries right chest and third finger left hand, minor injuries to both thighs and both legs.

A sketch showed multiple small abrasions to both legs, the neck, the forehead and a single abrasion on the chest.

The demining group reported that the victim had suffered "simple injuries" to forehead, chin, right chest wall, both thighs/legs and third finger of left hand.

A disability claim was submitted on 24th June 1997 in which his injuries were listed as: multiple injuries on face, chest wall, both arms and hands and both eyes. His permanent injury was only "mild stiffness of left hand" where 2nd metacarpal bone was fractured – which was assessed as a 15% disability.

Compensation of 33,214 Rs was forwarded on 11th December 1997, representing a 6.3% disability.

Analysis

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

The failure of the detector to signal on tripwires is mentioned in other Afghan accidents, and is presumed in this.

The failure to provide adequate tools must be seen as a management failing. The secondary cause is listed as "*Inadequate equipment*".

It is presumed that the victim recovered enough to undertake some form of work because his compensation payment was very small.

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.