6-14-1997

DDASaccident089

Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.libjmu.edu/cisr-globalcwd

Part of the Defense and Security Studies Commons, Peace and Conflict Studies Commons, Public Policy Commons, and the Social Policy Commons

Recommended Citation

https://commons.libjmu.edu/cisr-globalcwd/289

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Global CWD Repository by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.
DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 19/04/2006
Accident time: not recorded
Where it occurred: Tapi Tajbeg, Ward 7, Kabul City
Primary cause: Unavoidable (?)
Class: Excavation accident
ID original source: none
Organisation: [Name removed]
Mine/device: PMN AP blast

Accident number: 89
Accident Date: 14/06/1997
Country: Afghanistan
Secondary cause: Inadequate equipment (?)
Date of main report: [No date recorded]
Name of source: MAPA/UNOCHA
Ground condition: agricultural
(abandoned)
bushes/scrub
grass/grazing area
hard

Date record created: 24/01/2004
No of victims: 1
Date last modified: 24/01/2004
No of documents: 2

Map details

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

Accident Notes

inadequate metal-detector (?)
inadequate investigation (?)
handtool may have increased injury (?)
request for better PPE (?)
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 three years. It was 13 months since he had last attended a revision course and 45 days since his last leave. The accident occurred on agricultural land on a hillside: described as hard. A photograph showed flat and dusty ground with grass with many small trees.

The investigators determined that the victim was prodding with a bayonet in the squatting position, but was not wearing a frag-vest. He was wearing his helmet when he prodded onto a PMN mine. The victim's bayonet was "lost" and the helmet damaged.

The Team Leader said that metal contamination in the ground made it hard to differentiate readings and the ground was very hard. He said that such accidents might be avoided by issuing deminers with visors only, not helmets.

The Section Leader blamed the ground contamination, and acknowledged that the victim was also in error for prodding at the wrong angle.

The victim's partner said he was doing his job properly and that the continuously signalling (Schiebel AN/19) detector was the cause. He said better mine detectors would help prevent such accidents.

The victim said the area was not suitable for working prone, but that he did not know "the exact cause" of the accident.

**Conclusion**

The investigators concluded that the detector was constantly signalling so the victim could not centre the reading properly and so may have marked it poorly. They thought that the victim's helmet and visor saved his eyes from serious injury. They concurred that the ground conditions were unsuitable for prone prodding.

**Recommendations**

The investigators recommended that extra care should be taken in the clearance of such an area.

---

**Victim Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim number: 120</th>
<th>Name: [Name removed]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>Gender: Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status: deminer</td>
<td>Fit for work: yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation: 150,000 Rs</td>
<td>Time to hospital: not recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection issued: Helmet</td>
<td>Protection used: Helmet, Thin, short visor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of injuries:**

INJURIES
minor Arm
minor Legs
minor Neck
severe Hand
severe Leg
AMPUTATION/LOSS
Fingers
COMMENT
See medical report.

Medical report
The victim's injuries were summarised as two fingers of his right hand amputated, also right foot injury and left hand fragments.

A sketch showed fragments to both shins, fingers of right hand amputated, fragments on inside of left arm and in neck. [Note: The medical report is the only place where the fact that both legs were also hit by fragments is mentioned (even the deminer himself forgets them in his own statement).]

A disability claim was made on 14th June 1997 describing his injuries as "complete and compound" fractures of right hand – amputated index finger and last phalanx little-finger, skin grafts and fractures set. Wound right leg (foreign body removed surgically). As a result the function of his right hand was described as "limited". Compensation of 150,000 Rs was forwarded on 13th November 1997.

Analysis
The primary cause of this accident is listed as "Unavoidable" because it seems likely that the victim was working properly (as directed) when the accident occurred.

The fact that the victim was expected to work with a detector that did not allow him to pinpoint his finds was a failure of group management. The inadequacy of the detector was well known but had not been addressed. Either the detector should have been replaced with a better machine or a different clearance method used. The secondary cause is listed as "Inadequate equipment".

The use of a squatting position to "excavate" was in breach of UN requirements, but not in breach of the demining group's unauthorised variations to those requirements. The failure of the UN MAC to either listen to field feedback and adapt the SOP for local conditions, or enforce their own standards may be seen as a further 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.

Related papers
The deminer was interviewed in Kabul on 22nd July 1998. A photograph of him reconstructing his working position when the accident occurred is shown below. At the time of the interview he was working with the demining group as a guard/chawkidar.
The victim showed his injured hand – one entire finger was amputated (the index finger) and the top of the fore-finger. Scars between the third and fourth finger had contracted causing the fingers to be hooked and partly disabled. He showed a long scar on his right leg that may have been caused by his bayonet – but he said he was unconscious so did not know whether it was the bayonet or the blast.