

5-25-1997

DDASaccident099

Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database
AID

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Recommended Citation

Database, Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident, "DDASaccident099" (1997). *Global CWD Repository*. 299.
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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 19/04/2006	Accident number: 99
Accident time: not recorded	Accident Date: 25/05/1997
Where it occurred: Chawni Village, Ali Khail District, Paktia Province	Country: Afghanistan
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	Secondary cause: Victim inattention (?)
Class: Other	Date of main report: [No date recorded]
ID original source: none	Name of source: MAPA/UNOCHA
Organisation: [Name removed]	
Mine/device: PMN AP blast	Ground condition: bushes/scrub hard
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

visor not worn or worn raised (?)
partner's failure to "control" (?)
inadequate investigation (?)
inadequate area marking (?)
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 had been a deminer for four years. The time of his last revision course was not recorded. He had last been on leave 27 days before the accident. The ground in the area was described as a hard and bushy hillside beside a river. A photograph showed it as hard with low, sparse bush.

The investigators determined that the victim was marking the cleared area up to a mine he had uncovered and which was awaiting detonation. It was near the end of the day so he wanted to go off duty after the found mine was destroyed. He dropped a stone close (25cm) to the found mine and the impact detonated another mine close by. His visor was up at the time, so his face was unprotected. The mine was identified as a PMN [presumably by inference].

The Team Leader said that the deminer was marking the area without permission and was careless.

The victim said he was busy marking the area when the accident occurred and he did not know why it had happened.

Conclusion

The investigators concluded that the victim was negligent and rushed to mark the area before the destruction of the mine. They said he should not have marked the area prior to destruction, and should have kept at least 50cm from the found mine. His section Leader showed "poor performance and control".

Recommendations

The investigators recommended that the Section Leader be disciplined for poor performance; that deminers should not hurry and command group must control this; that, when marking cleared areas, a 50cm safety margin must be left; and that all Site Operations Officers should attend a specified training course.

Victim Report

Victim number: 132	Name: [Name removed]
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: no
Compensation: 500,000 Rs (100%)	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Helmet	Protection used: Helmet
Thin, short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Arm

minor Chest

minor Face

minor Legs

severe Eyes

severe Hand

AMPUTATION/LOSS

Finger

COMMENT

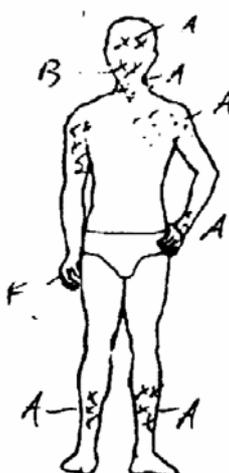
See medical report.

Medical report

The victim's injuries were summarised as: both eyes, right fingers, deep lacerations to right hand, superficial wounds to forehead, arm, chest and both lower legs.

A medical report stated that both eyes were injured, his right index finger was amputated, and he sustained fractures to his right middle and ring fingers, a deep wound to his right palm, and superficial wounds to his left forearm, chest and both legs.

A medic's sketch (reproduced below) added a burn to the face.



A photograph showed both hands discoloured.

The demining group submitted a disability claim on 13th August 1997 in which they described the victim's injuries as: injuries to both eyes and face, amputation of right index finger and fracture of two other right hand fingers. They said he had suffered loss of vision to both eyes of 100%.

A disability payment of 500,000 Rs was made on 8th October 1997.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "*Field control inadequacy*" because the victim was working too close to a known mine, had his visor raised and had not cleared the area he was standing over when he dropped the stone. He may have also felt a pressure to work quickly to finish for the day. His errors went uncorrected. The secondary cause is listed as "*Victim inattention*" because if he was under pressure to work quickly it seems likely that he did not think through what he was doing adequately.

The damage to his hand implies that it was close to the point of detonation, perhaps moving to catch the stone as it slipped?

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.