

1-15-1997

DDASaccident110

Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database
AID

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Recommended Citation

Database, Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident, "DDASaccident110" (1997). *Global CWD Repository*. 310.
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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 15/05/2006	Accident number: 110
Accident time: not recorded	Accident Date: 15/01/1997
Where it occurred: Haji Bashir Village, Dand District, Kandahar 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 AP blast	Ground condition: hard metal fragments rocks/stones
Date record created: 12/02/2004	Date last modified: 12/02/2004
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 investigation (?)
inconsistent statements (?)
long handtool may have reduced injury (?)
partner's failure to "control" (?)
squatting/kneeling to excavate (?)
use of pick (?)
visor not worn or worn raised (?)

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 eleven months. It was three months since his last revision course and 32 days since his last leave. The ground in the area was described as medium-hard agricultural land. A photograph showed bare ground – hard and with sheer strata - on an old watercourse.

The investigators determined that the victim had found bullets before and so impatiently used his pick vertically to investigate directly onto a detector reading. He was squatting when it occurred and had his visor raised. The deminer's pick was destroyed and his visor slightly damaged. They claim to have identified the mine as a PMN from "found fragments".

The victim said that his pick fell accidentally onto the detector reading as he was preparing to place the marking stones. He said the fault was his because he should not have had the pick in his hand while using the detector. He also said that "the command group" had told his group not to bother with marking stones. He added that his partner was not "controlling" him properly.

The Team Leader said the deminer was working carelessly and had his visor raised.

The Section Leader said that the deminer thought he was investigating a fragment so used his pick carelessly: it was his own fault because he did not follow the marking system properly.

The victim's partner said he did not follow the marking procedure properly and struck directly down onto the mine.

Conclusion

The investigators concluded that the victim was negligent about marking and did not lie prone to investigate the detector reading. He got face and eye injuries because his visor was raised. The Section Leader and Team Leader showed poor "command and control".

Recommendations

The investigators recommended that the Section Leader and Team Commander should be disciplined for poor command and control; that all deminers must be told to use the three stone marking system and keep their visor down when investigating a reading; and that when the ground is suitable for prodding prone, deminers must work prone.

Victim Report

Victim number: 143	Name: Name removed
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: not known
Compensation: 295,714 Rs	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Helmet	Protection used: Helmet
Thin, short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Face

minor Hand

minor Head

minor Legs

severe Eyes

AMPUTATION/LOSS

Eye

COMMENT

See medical report.

Medical report

The victim's injuries were summarised as injuries to his face, eyes, legs and left hand; both eyes damaged, face, right jaw wound, both ears lacerated, left and right leg superficial wounds; lower and upper lips and nose wounds; superficial injuries to left hand.

A photograph showed severe abrasion and sooting of left side of face from forehead to beard, and blood on his thighs.

A medic's sketch (reproduced below) showed fragments to legs.



A compensation claim was submitted on 29th May 1997 describing the injuries as total loss of his left eye, right eye foreign body, left ear laceration (repaired), and superficial injuries to his left hand and lip. His right eye was still being treated on 22nd May 1997 and showed "VR 6/6".

Compensation of 250,000 Rs was paid on 27th June 1997.

The UN MAC asked the insurers to reassess the claim, saying that the victim had lost one eye and spent four months in hospital for treatment to his other eye and the other injuries which had not been compensated.

An additional payment of 45,714 Rs was made on 21st August 1997.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "*Field control inadequacy*" because the victim was working without wearing his visor down and in an unsafe manner but his errors were not corrected.

The use of a pick and a squatting position to "excavate" were both 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 SOPs for local conditions, or enforce their own standards may be seen as a 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.