

3-2-1995

DDASaccident187

Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database
AID

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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 18/05/2006	Accident number: 187
Accident time: 10:25	Accident Date: 02/03/1995
Where it occurred: between Phum Snoeung and Tbeg Meanchey, Battambang	Country: Cambodia
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	Secondary cause: Inadequate training (?)
Class: Victim inattention	Date of main report: [No date recorded]
ID original source: none	Name of source: CMAC
Organisation: Name removed	
Mine/device: Type 72 AP blast	Ground condition: route (verge)
Date record created: 14/02/2004	Date last modified: 14/02/2004
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

no independent investigation available (?)
inadequate equipment (?)
disciplinary action against victim (?)
vegetation clearance problem (?)
inadequate training (?)

Accident report

At the time of the accident the demining group operated in three-man teams with a two-man drill. In this, one deminer used the detector and marked any signals while another looked for

tripwires, cut undergrowth and excavated any detector readings. A third deminer was resting. The three rotated at fixed intervals.

A report of an undated internal investigation written in Khmer was found on file. The following summarises its translated content.

The mined area was an unused road, the verges of which had been mined with Type 72A and Type 69 mines. The area has also been the scene of a battle.

Before the accident the victim's team had cleared a 25m lane traversing the road and on the morning of 2nd they were working on an adjacent lane.

The victim was working as a detector man and at 10:25 he changed roles within the team. Instead of returning to the rest area he walked along the adjacent cleared lane and tried to move a branch lying in an uncleared part of the road to the side of the lane. There was a stone about 50cm from the lane and, judging that there would be no mine underneath, he stepped on it to reach the branch. On his return journey his foot slipped off the stone and detonated a Type 72 mine. He suffered a traumatic amputation of the right leg below the knee.

The victim was retrieved from the uncleared area and given first aid. He was taken by ambulance to Battambang Provincial Hospital at 10:45, arriving at 12:05.

The Site Manager was at the other side of the operation and did not see the accident. He stated that the victim was retrieving some firewood.

The Section Commander was also away from the accident site, but said the victim was retrieving some wood.

The victim's partner confirmed the above.

The victim stated that he was aware that he was stepping into an uncleared area and that he was trying to retrieve a branch to use as a brush.

Victim Report

Victim number: 237	Name: Name removed
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: not known
Compensation: US\$2,350	Time to hospital: 1 hour 40 minutes
Protection issued: Safety spectacles	Protection used: not recorded

Summary of injuries:

AMPUTATION/LOSS

Leg Below knee

COMMENT

See medical report.

Medical report

A brief medical report stated that the victim had suffered a traumatic amputation of the right leg below the knee. No other injuries were recorded.

The Medevac report differs from the investigation report in timing, stating that the accident occurred at 10:30, the ambulance departed at 10:46 and arrived at the hospital at 12:00.

Compensation of \$2,350 was awarded on 30th May 1995 by an all-Cambodian Compensation Board. The victim's injuries warranted a total payout of \$2,500, as stated in the victim's contract, but the board felt obliged to take into account the fact that the victim had caused the accident himself by knowingly stepping into an uncleared area. The mandatory penalty for such an act was a fine of one month's salary. The board therefore decided to award a payout of \$2,500 less \$150 (the victim's monthly salary). The victim received the money on 27th June 1995.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "*Field control inadequacy*" because the victim was acting in an unsafe manner and was not corrected.

The secondary cause is listed as "*Inadequate training*" because it seems likely that the victim did not understand the risks he was running as he gathered wood in a minefield, or that standing on stones was not a guarantee of safety. The fact that the victim was gathering a branch to use as a "brush" implies that the group may not have been adequately supplied with the necessary tools.

The UN advised and internationally financed demining group then fined the victim for breaching SOPs. This added insult to his injuries. While a system of fines can act as a deterrent, there seems to be no obvious point in announcing a penalty after the "crime" was committed. The strategy would make more sense if it were the field supervisors who were penalised for failing to ensure that safe practices were followed, and if they knew this would happen in advance.