

7-27-1998

DDASaccident239

Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database
AID

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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 18/05/2006	Accident number: 239
Accident time: 09:15	Accident Date: 27/07/1998
Where it occurred: Orya Khail village, Zurmat, Paktia 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: agricultural (abandoned) ditch/channel/trench soft
Date record created: 17/02/2004	Date last modified: 17/02/2004
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

handtool may have increased injury (?)
partner's failure to "control" (?)
request for better PPE (?)
request for machine to assist (?)
squatting/kneeling to excavate (?)
visor not worn or worn raised (?)
inadequate equipment (?)

Accident report

At the time of the accident the demining group was working in two-man teams operating a one-man drill. An investigation on behalf of the UN MAC was carried out and its report made available in September 1999. The following summarises its content.

The victim had been a deminer for six years. His last leave was 53 days before the accident and his last revision course was four months before. The accident occurred in a ditch in agricultural land described as "medium soft" with gravel. The type of mine was identified from fragments found at the site.

The investigators determined that the ditch had contained many mines thought to have been brought into it by heavy rains in the past. The victim found a detector reading. He put on his helmet and started to prod in a squatting position. He detonated the mine with his bayonet at 09:15 (started work at 06:00).

The victim's thumb was amputated and he received gravel lacerations to his body.

The victim's helmet and bayonet were damaged but were not made available to the accident investigators.

The victim was treated on site, then evacuated to "FMU", then on to hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan.

The Team Leader pointed out that the team had only two fragmentation jackets that were being used by other deminers. He said the deminer was experienced and was working properly.

The Section Leader said that the victim was prodding properly in a "half-prone" position when the accident occurred. He regretted the lack of fragmentation jackets and asked that more be issued.

The victim's partner said that the victim was very careful but that the mines had been put in the ditch by rain and so could be at any angle. He thought that the use of a back-hoe in ditches could prevent recurrence.

Conclusion

The investigators decided that the victim was prodding too steeply for a deeply buried mine. He was not provided with a fragmentation jacket despite the fact that his situation in a ditch meant that he was allowed to squat and a jacket should have been issued [see "Analysis"].

Recommendations

The investigators recommended that supervisors ensure that deminers approach deeply buried mines by making a greater excavation so that they can maintain a safe angle. They added that fragmentation jackets should be issued and that the demining group should be disciplined for allowing prodding in a squatting position without issuing protection.

Victim Report

Victim number: 312	Name: Name removed
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: presumed
Compensation: not made available	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Helmet	Protection used: Helmet

Thin, short visor

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Arms

minor Chest

minor Face

minor Leg

severe Hand

AMPUTATION/LOSS

Finger

COMMENT

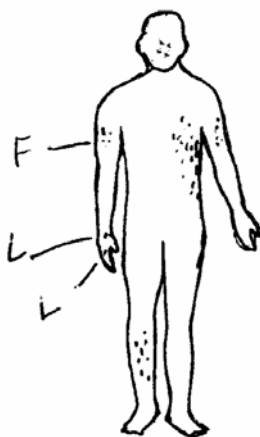
See medical report.

Medical report

A medic's report included a sketch showing lacerations and fragments to the victim's upper right arm, left chest, upper left arm, face, right hand and lower right leg. The medic recorded that his pulse was 80/min, BP 120/80 and respiration 18/min.

His injuries were listed as: right hand fingers injured: right hand pollex amputated at third phalanx. Right arm injured and lacerated. Left arm injured. Left side chest haemorrhage. Nose and mouth also injured - incisors damaged but eyes normal.

The medic's sketch is reproduced here.



A photograph showed the left hand with the forefinger fore-shortened and all the fingers swollen and bloody. The abrasions on the upper arm and chest appeared light. No other injuries were visible.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "*Field control inadequacy*" because the victim's visor was either worn raised or not worn and neither his partner nor his supervisor corrected the error. [The damage to the victim's face, nose and teeth indicates that his visor was worn raised.]

It is possible that the visor was too damaged to see through properly (as was seen frequently during 1998, 1999), in which case the failure to provide useable equipment represents a serious management failing.

The failure of the group's management to provide a fragmentation jacket may well have been because they did not have them. A few were issued by the UN MAC in the early 1990s but many of those are known to have been commandeered by fighters inside Afghanistan (a fact reported by senior UN staff, so known to them). The numbers available are not known and in any case the numbers issued did not allow for more than two per team. It is a little unreasonable for the investigators to expect deminers and their field supervisors to wear equipment they either do not have, or cannot all wear at the same time.