

1-19-2000

DDASaccident321

Humanitarian Demining Accident and Incident Database
AID

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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 19/05/2006	Accident number: 321
Accident time: 06:51	Accident Date: 19/01/2000
Where it occurred: Tuco-Tuco Minefield, Machaze Distruct, Manica Province	Country: Mozambique
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	Secondary cause: Inadequate training (?)
Class: Vegetation removal accident	Date of main report: 07/03/2000
ID original source: FM	Name of source: NPA (field)
Organisation: Name removed	
Mine/device: grenade	Ground condition: bushes/scrub trees
Date record created: 20/02/2004	Date last modified: 20/02/2004
No of victims: 1	No of documents: 3

Map details

Longitude: 33° 25' 04" E	Latitude: 20° 40' 31" S
Alt. coord. system: Long: 033.25' 04"E	Coordinates fixed by:
Map east:	Map north:
Map scale:	Map series:
Map edition:	Map sheet:
Map name:	

Accident Notes

no independent investigation available (?)
inadequate medical provision (?)
vegetation clearance problem (?)
inadequate equipment (?)
inadequate investigation (?)
inadequate training (?)

Accident report

A report on the accident was made available by the demining group in November 2000. The report included all related documents in one binding (many in Portuguese). The following summarises its content:

The accident was formally investigated by internal staff in a report that was undated.

The accident occurred in a mined area that had been worked on at the provincial government request since January 10th 2000. The method used was conventional manual demining. The accident site was 300 metres from a commercial building used as a position by Frelimo – forming part of a defensive ring minefield. The area was heavily overgrown. With a partner, the victim was working about 65 metres from the rest of the teams. They were clearing a “block” of about 20mx20m. Shortly after 06:00 the victim came across a small tree completely blocking his way.

The reports variously report the accident time as a few minutes after 06:00 and a few minutes before 07:00.

At 06:51 “while working in a dense vegetation area, the deminer used a machete to cut some branches “... He dragged the cut branches out and heard a “strange click”. He ran about “15 metres into a cleared area and took cover a few seconds before the F1-grenade exploded”.

The victim suffered minor injuries – not from fragmentation from the grenade but from the cut stumps of undergrowth as he took cover. He was given first aid and evacuated to Machaze District Hospital where it was confirmed that he “did not suffer serious injuries” and he was discharged.

After the detonation the branches where the grenade had been hanging were “completely smashed”. The detonation occurred in an uncleared area. The victim’s Schiebel detector was slightly damaged by fragments

The victim was back on duty “one day after” the accident.

The device was identified by the investigators who discovered the lever of an F1 hand grenade at the site and the victim’s tools “that were somehow damaged by the detonation”. The investigators reported that F1 grenades were found connected to tripwires in this area, but that no evidence of a tripwire was found at the accident site.

Conclusion

The investigators concluded that:

The deminers were not being closely and carefully supervised.

The victim had only used his tripwire feeler, not his detector before cutting vegetation.

The victim had not followed SOPs over vegetation cutting and removal and that this caused the accident.

Recommendations

The investigators recommended that:

1. The Team Leader and Deputies Team Leaders should have their “appreciation” of the SOPs evaluated “and close follow up by the monitoring team has to be done”.
2. Before work each day there should be a short technical briefing based on the experiences of the day before.
3. “Everyone in the field involved in planning of field operations together with the Team Leader should have a reasonable knowledge of SOP, we mean Deputy Team Leader and Platoon Commander”.

Victim Report

Victim number: 404	Name: Name removed
Age: 32	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: yes
Compensation: none	Time to hospital: 1 hour 25 minutes
Protection issued: Frontal apron Frag jacket	Protection used: Long visor; Frontal apron

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Arm

minor Hand

COMMENT

See medical report.

Medical report

A medical report stated:

Examined at 07:00

Blood pressure – 130/90

Pulse – 65

(Temperature not taken due to the lack of a thermometer at the site).

Victim examined in hospital at 08:20.

General condition – satisfactory.

Hydration – Good.

Victim slightly agitated.

Victim bruised himself in some bushes.

Bruise on back of left hand and an incision on the middle of the left hand, scratches on the arm without loss of "Haematicas".

No foreign bodies in the injuries which were due to small objects.

Treatment

Disinfection and dressing

Victim returned to the campsite at 09:10.

An accident summary made available by the demining group in 2002 recorded that no compensation was paid because the victim "did not suffer serious injuries".

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "*Field control inadequacy*" because it seems that the victim was working in breach of SOPs and his error was uncorrected. The secondary cause is listed as "*Inadequate training*" because some of the field supervisors were apparently unaware of the group's SOPs (see the investigator's conclusions) and so inadequately trained.

A machete is not an appropriate tool to use to cut undergrowth in an area where tripwire activated mines were anticipated. If the victim's statement is true, he cleared five metres using only a machete, no detector or other tool [See "Statements" – there are inconsistencies throughout the reports and statements.)

Related papers

A "Solicitacao" soliciting the assistance of the demining group was on file. This document was from the regional authorities asking for the area to be cleared.

"The office of the Governor informs us that on 28/06/98 at 11:30 three children activated a mine killing one of them.... (14 years old) and leaving the other two seriously injured. They were taken to Tete Provincial Hospital.

The commanding office Tete would like that a demining team survey and clear the area of the administration post.

Signed: Assistant Provincial Commander and Deputy Police Commissioner."

Statements

Summarised statements from two people involved in the accident are reproduced below.

The victim

On 19/02/00 the victim stated that after clearing about 10 metres using his Schiebel detector he encountered some shrubs. He started to cut the shrubs with a machete. He felt he had hit something but did not have the patience to investigate what he had hit so carried on cutting up to about 15 metres when suddenly there was an explosion of an F1 grenade that caused him slight injuries on his left hand. He received first aid without delay.

The Group Leader

The Group Leader stated that it was exactly 06:50 when the victim was slightly injured by an F1-grenade when cutting shrubs. He was 15 metres away from the place that the grenade detonated. He suffered slight burns and other injuries on the left hand and some grazes.

From 06:53 until 07:05 the access to the victim was checked. At 07:06 he received first aid. At 07:16 he was taken to hospital.

The victim had not been looking out carefully as he worked.