

3-14-2019

DDASaccident821

Database of Demining Accidents
DDAS

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DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 13/04/2019	Accident number: 821
Accident time: not recorded	Accident Date: 14/03/2019
Where it occurred: Sen Sam Village, O'Svay Commune, Trapaing Prasat Distruct, Oddar Meanchey Province	Country: Cambodia
Primary cause: Inadequate training (?)	Secondary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)
Class: Excavation accident	Date of main report: 15/03/2019
ID original source:	Name of source: Press
Organisation: Commercial deminers	
Mine/device: not recorded	Ground condition: agricultural (recent); bushes/scrub; dry/dusty; hard; route (verge)
Date record created:	Date last modified: 13/04/2019
No of victims: 2	No of documents: 1

Map details

Longitude:	Latitude:
Alt. coord. system: Not recorded	Coordinates fixed by:

Accident Notes

inadequate investigation (?)
inadequate training (?)
no independent investigation available (?)
protective equipment not worn (?)
safety distances ignored (?)
inadequate equipment (?)

Accident report

This accident was reported in the press. The press reports are reproduced below, edited for anonymity. Text in square brackets [] is editorial.

Cambodia, 14th March 2019



[Picture shows] Authorities pose next to a pair of mine detectors which were used by victims of a bomb explosion in Oddar Meanchey on Thursday.

Anti-tank mine explosion kills two: Fri, 15 March 2019

A bomb explosion on Thursday killed two of three “unlicensed” men who were hired to carry out mine clearance in O’Svay commune, in Oddar Meanchey province’s Trapaing Prasat district.

District police chief [name removed] said the villagers had collectively hired [Victim No.1], 18, [Victim No.2], 22, and [3rd team member], 49, to detonate land mines at a plantation in Sen Sam village. They have been in the business for more than 10 years as the locals know it, he said.

“The villagers trusted them, therefore, they were hired to do the work. The ground used to be a fighting area, containing a lot of unexploded ordnance [UXO]. Some experts have come to demine the ground five times already,” he said.

[He] said the authorities have “educated the locals about the dangers of the UXO and warned them not to clear the bombs by themselves”.

He said the trio were taking a break on the very spot where [Victim No.1] detected an anti-tank mine underneath them.



[The picture shows the crater which appears to be at the side of a dirt road.]

Without realising how deep the UXO was buried, [Victim No.1] dug the ground with a hoe, while [Victim No.2] boiled water for tea and [the third team member] walked away from the site to look for his snare.

As he kept digging, [Victim No.1]'s hoe eventually hit and detonated the mine, killing him and [Victim No.2] on the spot. [The third team member] who was away escaped unscathed.



[This pixelated picture shows the recovered remains of the Victims, one of whom was blown in half.]

Aware of the accident, Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) director-general [name removed] said his team members plan to visit the explosion site and examine the case on Friday, regarding it as "one of the biggest issues".

"The men were not demining experts, they never got any training. They only knew how to clear mines from observing other people, but they still risked their lives."

"They did not possess a licence nor did they have the expertise to carry out mine clearance, thus they did their work illegally," he said.

Victim Report

Victim number: 1039	Name: [Name removed]
Age: 18	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: DECEASED
Compensation: none	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Not recorded	Protection used: not recorded

Summary of injuries: FATAL

COMMENT: Fatal blast injuries. No medical report was made available.

Victim Report

Victim number: 1040	Name: [Name removed]
Age: 22	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: DECEASED

Compensation: none
Protection issued: Not recorded

Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection used: not recorded

Summary of injuries: FATAL

COMMENT: Fatal blast injuries. No medical report was made available.

Analysis

The villagers reported that the group of three commercial deminers had “been in the business for more than 10 years” but this is not credible for all of them because the two dead were aged 18 and 22. The survivor was aged 49 so may have had extensive demining experience but if he had, he had failed to supervise his colleagues so that they worked appropriately.

The use of a hoe to dig out a deep metal-detector signal implies that the explosive hazard was struck with great force by the tool. However, the hazard was not identified so it may have been something sensitive enough to be initiated without a great force. The crater is unusually deep and broad, so implying that the hazard may have been unusually large.

The primary cause of this accident is listed as ‘Inadequate training’ because the deminers were working without applying basic safety rules. This is apparent because Victim No.2 was brewing tea alongside the excavation being conducted by Victim No.1. The secondary cause is listed as a ‘Field control inadequacy’ because the mature team member (who may have been experienced) was not paying attention to the work of the young men as he went to check a snare (animal trap).

The ‘Inadequate equipment’ listed under notes refers to the hoe being used as an excavation tool.