

DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 22/01/2004	Accident number: 12
Accident time: not recorded	Accident Date: 10/08/1997
Where it occurred: Laghawat Village, Deyak District, Ghazni Province	Country: Afghanistan
Primary cause: Unavoidable (?)	Secondary cause: Inadequate equipment (?)
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
Date record created: 12/01/2004	Date last modified: 12/01/2004
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 metal-detector (?)

inadequate investigation (?)

request for clearance with explosive charge (?)

squatting/kneeling to excavate (?)

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 available. The following summarises its content.

The victim had last attended a revision course seven months before and had last been on leave eight days before the accident. The accident occurred on ground described as soft agricultural land. A photograph showed the ground which appeared to be dust on top of compacted fine-silt.

The investigators determined that the victim was working with a detector in a breaching lane when he got a reading. He marked the reading and started prodding, then the mine detonated.

The Team Leader stated that the victim was working properly and that the ground was too hard and the mines very deep (due to soil deposited in flood times). He said that these accidents could be avoided by using modern mine detectors – and complained that the Schiebel detector signalled on sun-baked bricks.

The Section Leader said that the deminer was working properly and that the ground was too hard.

The victim's partner said that the ground was too hard and his partner was working properly, adding that the reading should have been investigated with an explosive charge.

Conclusion

The investigators concluded that the victim did not use the blue marking procedure [not known] to mark the exact position of the reading, he did not prod in the correct position, and that command and control over the deminer by the Section Leader was poor.

Recommendations

The investigators recommended that all deminers must follow the three marks procedure, that all deminers must work prone when the ground is suitable, and that disciplinary action should be taken against the Section Leader for poor command and control.

Victim Report

Victim number: 23	Name: [Name removed]
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: not known
Compensation: 100,000 Rs	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Helmet	Protection used: not recorded
Thin, short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES
minor Arms

minor Head

minor Neck

severe Chest

severe Hand

severe Hearing

COMMENT

See medical report.

Medical report

The victim's injuries were summarised as being to his right hand and neck with shock to his head.

A photograph showed the entire right arm bandaged, the upper left arm bandaged, and the upper chest also bandaged, and a "plaster" alongside the navel.

A medic's sketch showed fragment/lacerations from neck to groin (fewer lower down) and on both arms.

The demining group reported that the victim suffered fragment injuries to both hands, chest, head and neck.

They submitted a disability claim on 30th December 1997 describing the victim as "still off duty" with 20% deafness (assessed on 28th November 1997), "surgical lesions on chest, arms, right hand". On 12th May 1998 the demining group reminded the insurers of a disability claim for the victim for over 50% hearing loss in both ears.

Compensation of 100,000 Rs was paid on 26th March 1998.

The UN MAC doctor was pressing insurers in mid-1998 for a higher settlement because the payment of 100,000 Rs was "inadequate" when the victim had lost his job as a result of the accident.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as "*Unavoidable*" because it seems that the victim was working properly (according to the rules of his group).

There was no record of the investigators having checked the ability of the detector to operate in the prevailing conditions.

The picture below shows a Schiebel AN/19 detector cable connection crudely repaired in the field. Detectors in similar condition were seen frequently by the researcher in 1998.



The use of a squatting position to "excavate" was 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 SOP for local conditions, or enforce their own standards may be seen as a further management failing.

The victim's claim of severe deafness is common in Afghan claims at this time, where insurance favoured such injury and testing the validity of claims was difficult.