

DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 18/05/2006	Accident number: 196
Accident time: 10:10	Accident Date: 24/11/1993
Where it occurred: Phum Sdau, Banan District, Battambang Provinc	Country: Cambodia
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	Secondary cause: Inadequate training (?)
Class: Handling accident	Date of main report: 02/12/1993
ID original source: NS [date inferred]	Name of source: MAG
Organisation: Name removed	
Mine/device: PMN-2 AP blast	Ground condition: rocks/stones trees
Date record created: 14/02/2004	Date last modified: 14/02/2004
No of victims: 2	No of documents: 1

Map details

Longitude:	Latitude:
Alt. coord. system: GR: 80042587	Coordinates fixed by:
Map east:	Map north:
Map scale:	Map series: 48PUV
Map edition:	Map sheet: 5534-1
Map name:	

Accident Notes

inadequate training (?)
no independent investigation available (?)
inadequate medical provision (?)
incomplete detonation (?)
protective equipment not worn (?)

Accident report

An internal accident report was written by an expatriate specialist, but not dated. It was made available by the demining group and the following summarises its content.

The investigation took place on the day following the accident. The report was made up of statements. The events surrounding the accident have been reconstructed in the summary that follows.

The two victims found the bottom of a burnt PMN-2 while working but did not report it because it did not contain TNT. It was lying on top of the grass. They moved it to the safe lane. After a rest break the two victims did not return to work immediately but took the mine under a tree where Victim No.2 tried to removed a screw from it. He then gave it to Victim No.1 who put it upside down on a stone and hit it three times with a prodder.

Victim No.1 was sitting with his legs splayed leaning forward, holding the mine with his left hand when the booster charge detonated. He lost a finger, the top of two others and part of the thumb on his left hand, and was also injured above the eye. Victim No.2 suffered superficial injuries "to his hand and head" [from which it seems likely that both deminers had a hand on or near the device when it detonated].

Their supervisor reported that the victim's bodies were not injured because they were wearing their frag-jackets but the victims were not wearing helmets ("goggles" or visors). The "sub-supervisor" stated that he "saw the prodder had been blown from his hand and a pair of goggles" a meter from Victim No.1.

The casualties were taken to S'dau district hospital and then to Battambang Provincial Hospital. Initially, no medical assistance was found at Battambang and the victims were taken to the "World Vision" doctors instead. Sometime later they returned to the hospital where they were treated.

Conclusion

The investigator concluded that SOPs were broken and the deminers were not aware of the danger they were in.

Recommendation

The investigator recommended that the victims should be given a "warning" and everybody should be briefed about the danger from burnt mines.

Victim Report

Victim number: 249	Name: Name removed
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: not known
Compensation: not made available	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Frag jacket	Protection used: Frag jacket
Helmet	
Short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Face
severe Leg
AMPUTATION/LOSS
Fingers
COMMENT
See medical report.

Medical report

An initial medical assessment of Victim No.1 was dated 2nd December 1993. It stated:
"He had a large open wound to the left frontal area above his left eye, the eye itself was closed due to swelling there was evidence of imbedded particles of the mine in the lacrimal, zygoma, maxilla areas of his face. His left hand was redressed over the original bandages in place. He had a large haematoma to the inside of his left thigh with particles of the mine embedded. Further examination revealed a large open and deep wound to the inside of his lower left leg with a large piece of stone, approx 6 to 8mm embedded."

Victim Report

Victim number: 250	Name: Name removed
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: presumed
Compensation: not made available	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Frag jacket	Protection used: Frag jacket
Helmet	
Short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES
minor Face
minor Hand
COMMENT

No medical report was made available.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "*Field control inadequacy*" because the victims were in breach of SOPs and went uncorrected.

The demining NGO's "goggles" were in fact safety spectacles designed for industrial use.

It is not clear how the mine was burnt. Did the demining group burn off the area prior to starting clearance, had there been a "brush fire"? – not common in Cambodia but they do occur – or was the mine "destroyed" by burning after its discovery during demining?

The ignorance of the victims about the mechanism of the most common mine in Cambodia implies incomplete training (80% of all mines found in Cambodia were PMN-2s according to the country MAC in January 1999) which is a serious management failing. The secondary cause is listed as *"Inadequate training"*.

See also the accident that occurred in Cambodia on 23rd December 1996.