

DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 18/05/2006	Accident number: 238
Accident time: 08:45	Accident Date: 03/06/1998
Where it occurred: Butkhak village, Bagrami district, Kabul Province	Country: Afghanistan
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	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-2 AP blast	Ground condition: bushes/scrub electromagnetic hard pylons and surrounds
Date record created: 17/02/2004	Date last modified: 17/02/2004
No of victims: 2	No of documents: 2

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 (?)
protective equipment not worn (?)
request for machine to assist (?)
disciplinary action against victim (?)
safety distances ignored (?)
pressure to work quickly (?)

use of shovel (?)

Accident report

At the time of the accident the demining group were working with a "new" one-man drill in two man teams (changing about every 15 minutes).

An accident report was made on behalf of the UN MAC and made available in September 1999. The following summarises its content.

The accident occurred on land around power pylons that was described as "medium" hard. Victim No.1 had been a deminer for 11 months and had last attended a revision course four months before. Victim No.2 had been a Section Leader for the demining group for ten months. The mine was identified as a PMN-2 from fragments found at the site.

The room around the pylons was limited, so deployment was in sections using a one-man breaching drill. The pylons were protected with barbed wire and there were bushes present. Photographs of the site showed no bushes or barbed wire. Because the detectors signalled continuously the deminers were having to prod/excavate with a bayonet. The accident investigators believed that the detector signalled continuously because of the power-line and an "underground earth line".

Victim No.1 found two PMN-2 mines while excavating and they were destroyed. At about 08:45 he paused to remove loose soil and removed his helmet and visor. He used a shovel to remove the loose soil and detonated a mine. As a "result he got serious injuries on his both eyes, face". His Section Leader was not maintaining the correct safety distance (4m away) and was also injured.

The victims were treated on site, then removed to a local hospital, then Kabul and then Victim No.1 was evacuated by air to hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan.

The Team Leader stated that Victim No.1 was working properly removing "dead soil" after prodding. He thought that something may have dropped from the power-line to cause the accident or that the removal of the soil might have pulled some of the barbed wire and bushes around the pylon and caused the accident. He said that Victim No.1 suffered injuries to his eyes, face and his right leg below the knee. Victim No.2 "got a fragment on his face" and "smoke" in his eyes. He thought that the use of a back-hoe would prevent such incidents in future.

The Victim stated that he was "prodding" but that the mine in the accident was deeper than the others so he did not prod deeply enough.

Conclusion

The investigators concluded that the victim failed to "keep enough distance between cleared and uncleared area" [dug with the shovel beyond the area he had checked]. They also identified pressure from the local authorities to clear the area quickly, which had prevented the deminers from attending a refresher course, as a contributory factor.

Recommendations

The investigators recommended that dogs be used in areas with continuous readings whenever possible and that machines be used when dogs cannot. They further recommended that the use of a shovel in AP mined areas be stopped, that the Section Leader be disciplined and that the regional office liaise with the local authorities to try to stop them applying pressure "during operations".

Victim Report

Victim number: 310	Name: Name removed
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: not known
Compensation: not made available	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Helmet	Protection used: none
Thin, short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Face

minor Hand

minor Head

minor Legs

severe Eyes

COMMENT

See medical report.

Medical report

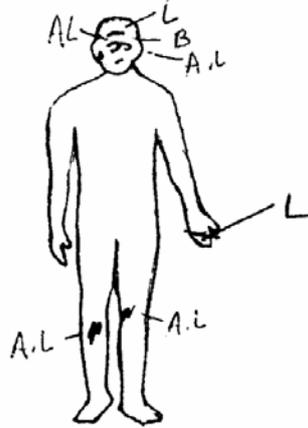
A mine casualty report listed Victim No.1's injuries as:

- injuries to both eyes and temporal area;
- head at frontal area;
- left hand between thumb and fourth finger;
- small injuries on left leg;
- perforation on left ear;
- corneal abrasion both eyes;
- superficial face.

The demining group reported victim No.1's injuries as:

- foreign bodies both eyes;
- foreign body intercranial at Rt temporal region;
- lacerated wounds forehead, left hand, right leg.

A medic's sketch (reproduced below) showed a below knee, right leg abrasion/laceration and an above knee, left leg abrasion/laceration, a left hand laceration along with forehead and facial burns, abrasions and lacerations.



The treatments given were illegible - but may have been: "Hemacil 500cc, Dipyron, Apiclox 1000mg"

Photographs of Victim No.1 showed his legs bandaged above and below the knee, his right hand bandaged and his face being cleaned. His eyes were swollen and there were multiple light fragment injuries on his forehead, nose and cheeks.

Victim Report

Victim number: 311	Name: Name removed
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: supervisory	Fit for work: presumed
Compensation: not made available	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Helmet	Protection used: none
Thin, short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Eyes

minor Face

COMMENT

See medical report.

Medical report

A mine casualty report listed Victim No.2's injuries as:

foreign bodies both eyes;

multiple bruises on face.

A sketch showed fragments and lacerations to both eyes of Victim No.2.

At 08:49 the field medic gave inj-pipyron 2cc and Ampiclox 500g

Photographs of Victim No.2 showed light cheek lacerations and dressed eyes.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "*Field control inadequacy*" for two reasons.

1. Victim No.1 should not have continued to remove soil when the supervisor approached him. Victim No.2, the supervisor, should have stopped him.
2. Victim No.1 was wrong to assume that the mine would not be any deeper than those he had previously located at a shallow depth. The supervisor should have recognised what he was doing and stopped him.

It is questionable whether a shovel was the right tool to use for the removal of loose earth before checking again with a detector. A smaller, more controllable tool is usually preferred. The secondary cause is listed as "*Inadequate equipment*".

However, it is interesting to note that in this case the UN MAC put pressure on the demining group and the supervisor was dismissed. In other cases where the failure of supervision was more extreme, the same pressure seems not to have been applied and all blame has fallen on the deminer.

2000 MAC manager comment

In nearly all cases, the MAC recommends or requests that appropriate disciplinary action be taken by the NGO HQ against the concerned individuals. It is then up to the NGO to decide the actual disciplinary action to be taken. In rare cases of blatant, incontestable and gross negligence, the MAC will insist that concerned individuals be dismissed.

Related papers

A sketch map showed that the accident occurred close to the "leg" of a pylon.

A letter from the UN MAC to the demining group demanding corrective action was on file.

A letter to the UN MAC from the demining group recorded that the Section Leader (Victim No.2) was dismissed "due to poor supervision and control over his section".

A letter from the regional MAC to the UN MAC explained that the density of mines around each pylon (20-40) was the reason for not deploying dogs. It also reported ongoing success in discussions with the local authorities in the attempt to make them understand the demining programme.

Documents were not made available for copying.