

DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 19/05/2006	Accident number: 337
Accident time: 08:50	Accident Date: 16/04/2000
Where it occurred: Ghar Village Sarpuzah, Ward 6, Kandahar	Country: Afghanistan
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	Secondary cause: Inadequate equipment (?)
Class: Excavation accident	Date of main report: 18/06/2000
ID original source: No: MI 04/2000	Name of source: IGM
Organisation: Name removed	
Mine/device: PMN AP blast	Ground condition: hard residential/urban rocks/stones
Date record created: 20/02/2004	Date last modified: 20/02/2004
No of victims: 1	No of documents: 1

Map details

Longitude:	Latitude:
Alt. coord. system:	Coordinates fixed by:
Map east:	Map north:
Map scale: Task 24-2401-006-151	Map series:
Map edition:	Map sheet:
Map name:	

Accident Notes

inadequate investigation (?)
squatting/kneeling to excavate (?)
use of pick (?)

Accident report

Access to the accident data was denied by the MAC programme manager. A brief summary of the accident was provided by a professional researcher who had access to the original documents. That summary is reconstructed here.

[Map references are not recorded in the MAC records, so the minefield task number (when available) is entered in the Map Ref field at the Incident/Accident tab as an identifying feature.]

The victim had been working as a deminer for three years. His last revision course had been on October 31st 1999 and his last leave had been 16 days previously. The area being cleared was described as “residential land”. Conditions were very difficult, with very hard stony ground and difficult access and “viewing problems” for the supervisors. Frag-jackets had been issued, but were not taken to the task. A backhoe was available but could not work in this area due to rocks and steepness.

The demining team had been working at the site since February. The Victim was working in a breaching lane and set off a PMN mine. He was probably using a pick and was not lying prone and was not wearing a frag jacket. He was wearing a helmet and visor. His pick was broken up and his bayonet disappeared.

The Victim suffered multiple minor injuries of his right arm and forearm and a wound to the left side of chest. He also had multiple minor injuries of his right leg.

The area around the Victim had to be cleared before he could be reached. The first medic reached the Victim after 10 minutes. The Victim was given first aid and taken to the ICRC hospital in Kandahar City. He was discharged on the same day with his injuries described as minor. He was sent on leave for several days.

Conclusion

The investigators concluded that the accident was preventable had there been a “full technical application of the SOP”.

Victim Report

Victim number: 424	Name: Name removed
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: yes
Compensation: not made available	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Frag jacket	Protection used: Helmet; Thin, short visor
Helmet	
Thin, short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Arm

minor Chest

minor Leg

COMMENT

No medical report was made available.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a "*Field control inadequacy*" because the Victim was apparently using his pick carelessly and his error was not corrected. The field supervisors made another error by issuing frag-jackets (probably only two per team, which was "normal" in previous deployments) but then neglecting to ensure that they were taken to the site. The secondary cause is listed as "*Inadequate equipment*".

The pick or hoe has featured in many excavation accidents recorded in this database. There is some evidence that its use is inappropriate. However, its length and the consequent distance between the victim's hands and the blast frequently results in light injuries.

That it only took eight weeks to investigate this accident is a matter of congratulation compared to the time-lapse involved in some investigations in this theatre. While the time lapses may imply a carelessness about the need to learn from accidents quickly, no criticism of the NGO charged with carrying out accident investigations for the UN MAC is intended. The NGO is frequently not provided with the means to carry out investigations in a timely manner.

The failure of the MAC to allow access to accident reports means that the report made here is acknowledged to be unsatisfactory. It will be revised if access is ever allowed. The failure of the MACC to act with transparency is bound to raise the question, "what have they to hide"?