

# DDAS Accident Report

## Accident details

<b>Report date:</b> 09/04/2019	<b>Accident number:</b> 815
<b>Accident time:</b> 15:00	<b>Accident Date:</b> 15/03/2018
<b>Where it occurred:</b> ACO tank HQ, Moha Saing commune, Phnom Sruoch district	<b>Country:</b> Cambodia
<b>Primary cause:</b> Management/control inadequacy (?)	<b>Secondary cause:</b> Inadequate training (?)
<b>Class:</b> Handling accident	<b>Date of main report:</b> 16/03/2018
<b>ID original source:</b> None	<b>Name of source:</b> Press
<b>Organisation:</b> [name removed]	
<b>Mine/device:</b> Ordnance	<b>Ground condition:</b> demolition site (explosives)
<b>Date record created:</b>	<b>Date last modified:</b> 09/04/2019
<b>No of victims:</b> 5	<b>No of documents:</b> 1

## Map details

<b>Longitude:</b>	<b>Latitude:</b>
<b>Alt. coord. system:</b> Not recorded	<b>Coordinates fixed by:</b>

## Accident Notes

inadequate investigation (?)  
inadequate training (?)  
no independent investigation available (?)  
PPE not used (?)  
safety distances ignored (?)

## Accident report

This accident was widely reported in the press. At first the two mature Australian servicemen involved were described as demining trainers but later this was denied. It is not known what their status actually was. The press reports are reproduced below, edited for anonymity. Text in square brackets [ ] is editorial.

<https://www.khmertimeskh.com/114353/two-dead-three-injured-in-landmine-training-explosion/>

March 16, 2018

Two dead, three injured in landmine training explosion

At least two people, an Australian trainer and a Cambodian military officer, died yesterday and three others were injured when a mine exploded during landmine clearance training at a military base in Kampong Speu province.

The chief of the provincial penal police bureau said the incident occurred at about 3pm at the ACO tank headquarters in Phnom Sruoch district's Moha Saing commune where a shooting range is located.

The Australian trainer was identified as [name removed], 40, and the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces officer was named as Lieutenant Colonel [name removed], 52.

Another injured Australian was identified as [name removed], 41, who sustained minor injuries to his right arm after being hit by shrapnel.

Two other Cambodian military officers – [name removed], 50, and [name removed], 48 – also sustained injuries, according to [the chief of the provincial penal police bureau].

[A photograph showed one of the injured with a small bandage on the right forearm: this appears to have been Victim no.3.]

“The mine exploded when they were being trained how to clear landmines. When they heard the signal that a mine was underground, [Victim No.2] went to pick it up and it exploded,” [name removed] said.

[Name removed], spokesman for the Defence Ministry, confirmed that two people died and three were injured from the explosion during a mine training exercise.

“It was a technical error during training,” [name removed] said, noting that officials were compiling information.

Reached by phone yesterday, [name removed], commander of the tank headquarters, declined to comment.

The director of the provincial hospital, said Australian embassy officials came to bring the body of the dead Australian to Phnom Penh while the Cambodian officer's body was taken by his family for a funeral.



“Two military officers are receiving medical treatment at the hospital,” [the hospital director] said. [The picture shows a man with blood stained trousers and an IV drip in his arm speaking on a telephone.]

Kampong Speu provincial Governor [name removed] said the explosion occurred while the victims were engaged in a mine clearing exercise.

“According to the police report, an Australian trainer visited our military officers and taught them how to clear landmines at the shooting range,” he said. “Then they saw a sign for a mine, approached it, picked it up and it exploded.”

“The mine was made in the Soviet Union and was abandoned during the war,” he said. “We are very sorry. Maybe, they were careless because those who died were landmine experts.”

The Australian embassy in Phnom Penh did not respond to an email for comment.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cambodia-australia/two-australians-among-victims-of-cambodia-landmine-blast-idUSKCN1GR1ED>

### **Australians among victims of Cambodia landmine blast**

PHNOM PENH (Reuters) - A landmine explosion on Thursday during a joint training exercise on a military base in Cambodia killed two people, including an Australian, and injured three, police said.

The blast happened in the province of Kampong Speu, 50 km (30 miles) west of the capital, Phnom Penh, said provincial police chief [name removed].

“We don’t know what happened yet, all we know is that there was an explosion,” he said, adding that the Australian who was killed, and another who was injured, were in their 40s and that Cambodian army men made up the rest of the victims.

The army is also investigating the blast, said defence ministry spokesman [name removed].

A spokesman for Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said in an emailed statement that Australia was providing consular assistance to the families of an Australian man killed and another injured in Kampong Speu.

Accident 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018 Cambodia

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/2-killed-during-land-mine-clearance-training-in-cambodia/2018/03/15/be9ae81c-28cb-11e8-a227-fd2b009466bc\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.123cc3bd0056](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/2-killed-during-land-mine-clearance-training-in-cambodia/2018/03/15/be9ae81c-28cb-11e8-a227-fd2b009466bc_story.html?utm_term=.123cc3bd0056)

### **2 killed during land mine clearance training in Cambodia**

One Australian has been killed and another injured in Cambodia. One Cambodian was killed and two others injured, too.

There are conflicting reports about the cause of the explosion that killed the two men.



In this March 15, 2018 photo, provided by the Cambodian National Police, the body of an unidentified individual is covered with a white blanket at the local provincial hospital of Kampong Speu province, about 50 kilometers (31 miles) west of the capital Phnom Penh. A land mine exploded accidentally during clearance training at a military base in western

Cambodia, killing two people, including an Australian trainer, and injuring three others, police said. (Cambodia National Police via AP) (Associated Press)

SIEM REAP, Cambodia — A land mine exploded accidentally during clearance training at a military base in western Cambodia, killing two people, including an Australian, and injuring three others, police said.

National police said the explosion occurred Thursday in Kampong Speu province when a soldier who was being trained mishandled a decades-old land mine that had been removed from the ground. They said a 45-year-old Australian was killed and another 41-year-old Australian was wounded.

Police said one Cambodian soldier was killed and two others were injured.

Police initially said the Australians were training the soldiers, but the Defence Ministry said that was not the case.

Ministry spokesman General [name removed] said Friday that the Australians went to the military base after being invited by Cambodian soldiers who were their friends. He said the mine exploded after one of the Australians “played with it.”

“We did not invite them to train our soldiers but they just visited their friends. But once they saw the mine, they picked it up and played with it before it exploded,” he said.

### **Australian among two killed in Cambodia landmine accident**

Mine explodes when Australian military trainers were working with Cambodian colleagues 50km from Phnom Penh. An Australian and a Cambodian were killed and a second Australian injured when a landmine was accidentally detonated during a military training exercise west of Phnom Penh, police say.

The Australians were military trainers and another two Cambodian soldiers were also wounded in Kampong Speu, 50km from Phnom Penh, police said. Their names have not yet been released.

Police said the mine detonated at a tank base after a war-era bomb was detected underground and then picked up.

Kampong Speu provincial governor [name removed] told the Phnom Penh Post it was believed the casualties had been shooting at targets at about 2pm local time on Thursday when they noticed something on the ground.

“He said they went to pick up the object, a Russian-made bomb, which then exploded,” The Post reported.

Kampong Speu provincial hospital health department director [name removed] said the three injured people had received “light injuries” to their hands. “The body of the Cambodian soldier has already been taken out by family while the Australian body is still at the hospital waiting to be taken by the Australian embassy,” [he] then said.

The army is also investigating the blast, said defence ministry spokesman [name removed].

A spokesman for Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said in an emailed statement that Australia was providing consular assistance to the families of an Australian man killed and another injured in Kampong Speu.

## **Australians in deadly Cambodia explosion were not military personnel**

Cambodian authorities say explosion that killed two and injured two was not part of a military exercise.

An Australian man who was killed and another who was injured in a landmine accident at an army base in Cambodia on Thursday were not Australian defence force personnel and the explosion did not occur during a military exercise, the Australian Department of Defence has confirmed.

Cambodian authorities initially claimed the men were military trainers present at an exercise at a tank base in Kampong Speu province, about 50km from Phnom Penh, when the war-era bomb detonated. The explosion also killed one Cambodian soldier and wounded a second.

Later, [name removed], a spokesman for Cambodia's defence ministry, said no such military exercise had been taking place and the Australians were on a "very personal visit."

"The Australian men were invited to visit the base by the military officers at the base," he said. "They are friends with the Cambodian military [officers] who [are] stationed there."

[Name removed] said it was not clear whether the Australian who was killed was a tourist: "But obviously he was not a military exercise trainer. He was just visiting."

"We are searching for his passport. Even the [Australian] embassy has been requesting for more details, which we could not share with [them] at the moment."

However, other officials claimed the men were tourists.

"They apparently were just tourists visiting the base. As they approached the shooting range, one of them picked up the bomb," said the provincial governor of Kampong Speu, [name removed], who claimed one of the men had told officers he had expertise with mines.

An assistant to base commander [name removed], who refused to provide his name, also said the Australians were tourists.

Another soldier at the base, who also refused to give his name, said Australian tourists regularly used weapons at the base "for fun", though this was denied by [name removed].

The base is filled with unexploded ordnance and military officials say it is regularly used to practice demining and not open to the public.



For years, videos have circulated online apparently showing tourists in Cambodia paying to use military-grade weapons such as rocket-launchers at bases like the one in Kampong Speu. [The photo is grabbed from an online video apparently taken at the base.]

[Name removed], a villager who lives about a kilometre from the base, said he regularly heard sounds of explosions coming from the site.

"[I] have noticed western people come over," he said. "I don't know what they have been doing inside."

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/australian-killed-in-landmine-blast-in-cambodia-20180315-p4z4ll.html>

Jakarta: An Australian man and a Cambodian man were killed when a landmine detonated during a military training exercise west of Phnom Penh on Thursday, police say.

Three others were injured, including a second Australian, though his injuries are said not to be serious. He has been treated at a hospital in Phnom Penh and is able to walk.

The two Australian and three Cambodian soldiers "went to a shooting range, where many kinds of unexploded ordnance remain.

"When they saw an unexploded ordnance, they picked it up by hand, then it exploded," the General wrote to the commander-in-chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces.

"There were five casualties, two persons were seriously injured, and other three men were slightly wounded. They were sent to Kampong Speu Referral Hospital. Two of them died due to serious injuries."

"The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is providing consular assistance to the family of an Australian man killed in Kampong Speu Province and to an Australian man injured in the same province," a department spokesperson said.

"Due to privacy obligations we are unable to provide further information."

Police said the mine detonated at a tank base after a Cambodian soldier, who was killed in the incident, picked up the war-era bomb after it had been detected under the ground.

SIEM REAP, Cambodia (AP) — A land mine exploded accidentally during clearance training at a military base in western Cambodia, killing two people, including an Australian, and injuring three others, police said.

National police said the explosion occurred Thursday in Kampong Speu province when a soldier who was being trained mishandled a decades-old land mine that had been removed from the ground. They said a 45-year-old Australian was killed and another 41-year-old Australian was wounded.

Police said one Cambodian soldier was killed and two others were injured.

Police initially said the Australians were training the soldiers, but the Defence Ministry said that was not the case.

Ministry spokesman General [name removed] said Friday that the Australians went to the military base after being invited by Cambodian soldiers who were their friends. He said the mine exploded after one of the Australians "played with it."

"We did not invite them to train our soldiers but they just visited their friends. But once they saw the mine, they picked it up and played with it before it exploded," he said.

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/50114652/australians-killed-injured-on-military-base-were-tourists/>

The Australian national killed last week in an explosion on a military base in Kampong Speu province was not a demining trainer as initially reported, but a tourist visiting the base to shoot weapons.

[Name removed], chief of the provincial penal police bureau, said after the incident on Thursday afternoon that the Australian man killed at the ACO tank headquarters in Phnom Sruoch district's Moha Saing commune was a demining trainer.

The killed Australian trainer was identified as [Victim no.1], 40. A Royal Cambodian Armed Forces officer also killed in the explosion was named as Lieutenant Colonel [Victim No.2], 52.

Another Australian injured was identified as [name removed, Victim No.3], 41. Two other Cambodian military officers – [name removed], 50, and [name removed], 48 – also sustained injuries.

[Name removed] and Defence Ministry spokesman General [name removed] initially reported that the killed Australian was at the base training officers in mine clearance. But Australian officials have since contradicted the reports and the provincial governor, and Gen [name removed], revised their claims.

[Name removed], a media officer with Australia's Department of Defence, said that no Australian military officers were involved in a mine clearance exercise on the ACO tank headquarters, where there is also a shooting range.

"This accident did not occur as part of a military training exercise, and no Australian Defence Force personnel were involved," she said.

[Name removed], a media officer with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, said that the department was providing consular assistance to the family of an Australian man killed and another man injured at the headquarters.

"Due to privacy obligations we are unable to provide further information," he said. Provincial Governor [name removed] corroborated what Australian officials said, noting that the explosion was not caused by any training exercise.

"They are tourists," he said. "They aren't soldiers who were assigned to a training exercise."

[Name removed] claimed the Australian men were visiting friends at the base. "They know each other and they came to shoot for fun," he said. "They saw a mine left abandoned during the war and they picked it up, triggering the explosion."

Gen [name removed] said the incident claimed the lives of two people at the shooting range on the ACO military base.

"They did not contact us. They just came and visited," he said of the Australians. "They aren't involved with our unit, but their friends [Cambodian military officers] work there."

"They are friends with our military officers and they brought them to visit the base," he said, adding that lots of UXO were left at the shooting range.

## Victim Report

<b>Victim number:</b> 1019	<b>Name:</b> [name removed]
<b>Age:</b> 40	<b>Gender:</b> Male
<b>Status:</b> Trainer	<b>Fit for work:</b> DECEASED
<b>Compensation:</b> Not paid	<b>Time to hospital:</b> not recorded
<b>Protection issued:</b> Not recorded	<b>Protection used:</b> not recorded

**Summary of injuries:** FATAL

COMMENT: Victim apparently died after arrival in hospital. No Medical report was made available.

### Victim Report

<b>Victim number:</b> 1020	<b>Name:</b> [name removed]
<b>Age:</b> 52	<b>Gender:</b> Male
<b>Status:</b> Soldier	<b>Fit for work:</b> DECEASED
<b>Compensation:</b> Not made available	<b>Time to hospital:</b> not recorded
<b>Protection issued:</b> Not recorded	<b>Protection used:</b> not recorded

**Summary of injuries:** FATAL

COMMENT: Victim apparently died after arrival in hospital. No Medical report was made available.

### Victim Report

<b>Victim number:</b> 1021	<b>Name:</b> [name removed]
<b>Age:</b> 41	<b>Gender:</b> Male
<b>Status:</b> Trainer	<b>Fit for work:</b> yes
<b>Compensation:</b> None	<b>Time to hospital:</b> not recorded
<b>Protection issued:</b> Not recorded	<b>Protection used:</b> not recorded

**Summary of injuries:** minor Arm

COMMENT: No medical report was made available.

### Victim Report

<b>Victim number:</b> 1022	<b>Name:</b> [name removed]
<b>Age:</b> 50	<b>Gender:</b> Male
<b>Status:</b> Soldier	<b>Fit for work:</b> presumed
<b>Compensation:</b> Not made available	<b>Time to hospital:</b> Not recorded
<b>Protection issued:</b> Not recorded	<b>Protection used:</b> not recorded

**Summary of injuries:** minor Legs

COMMENT: No Medical report was made available.

## Victim Report

<b>Victim number:</b> 1023	<b>Name:</b> [name removed]
<b>Age:</b> 48	<b>Gender:</b> Male
<b>Status:</b> Soldier	<b>Fit for work:</b> presumed
<b>Compensation:</b> Not made available	<b>Time to hospital:</b> not recorded
<b>Protection issued:</b> Not recorded	<b>Protection used:</b> not recorded

### Summary of injuries: minor

COMMENT: Minor injuries (requiring hospital treatment). No Medical report was made available.

### Analysis

The use of the word 'mine' to describe anything explosive is not uncommon in Cambodia where the words 'mine' and 'bomb' are often used as synonyms. The hazard is recorded as a piece of unidentified ordnance for several reasons. Had this been an anti-personnel blast mine, it is unlikely that it could have inflicted the extensive injuries suffered, even if the Victims were not wearing PPE. Had it been a large anti-tank blast mine, it is likely that the bodies of the deceased would have been in pieces. The reports state that "lots of UXO" is present at the site. From the available evidence it is thought likely that the explosive hazard involved in this accident was a piece of unexploded ordnance with a fragmentation hazard because the spread of injuries include fragmentation to the arm of one and to the legs of at least one other survivor. The hospital director also reported that all three survivors had light injuries to their hands, but this is not obvious in the available photographs.

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a 'Management control inadequacy' because either the base was being used for training that the senior management did not know about or it was being used to allow tourists to fire weapons, which the senior management did not know about. Either way, the senior management failed to retain control by knowing what was going on and controlling risk taking behaviour. The secondary cause is listed as 'Inadequate training' because it is presumed that the victims did not know that their actions were hazardous.

Five people were injured by a single device which indicates that safety/working distances were not being observed. The lack of mention of PPE or its effectiveness makes it probable that PPE was not being worn.