

DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 12/02/2004	Accident number: 115
Accident time: not recorded	Accident Date: 07/07/1998
Where it occurred: Paktya	Country: Afghanistan
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	Secondary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)
Class: Excavation accident	Date of main report: [No date recorded]
ID original source: none	Name of source: ATC
Organisation: Name removed	
Mine/device: PMN AP blast	Ground condition: not recorded
Date record created: 12/02/2004	Date last modified: 12/02/2004
No of victims: 1	No of documents: 1

Map details

Longitude:	Latitude:
Alt. coord. system:	Coordinates fixed by:
Map east:	Map north:
Map scale: not recorded	Map series:
Map edition:	Map sheet:
Map name:	

Accident Notes

inadequate investigation (?)
no independent investigation available (?)
handtool may have increased injury (?)
squatting/kneeling to excavate (?)
visor not worn or worn raised (?)

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.

No formal accident report was available in September 1999.

A preliminary accident report from the demining group simply recorded that "while prodding he was injured due to a PMN mine explosion". The victim suffered an amputated thumb with other severe hand injuries, also minor arm, legs, chest, and face injuries.

The facial injury implies that the visor was worn incorrectly, not worn, or too weak to perform its design function (as was common in Afghanistan accidents at this time). The hand injuries are fairly typical of those occurring when using the short AK bayonet (favoured in Afghanistan and approved by the UN MAC) as a prodder.

Victim Report

Victim number: 149	Name: Name removed
Age:	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: not known
Compensation: not on record	Time to hospital: not recorded
Protection issued: Helmet	Protection used: not recorded
Thin, short visor	

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES

minor Arm

minor Chest

minor Face

minor Legs

severe Hand

AMPUTATION/LOSS

Finger

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 not wearing (or not wearing properly) appropriate protective equipment, and his error went uncorrected.

It is possible that the visor was too damaged to see through properly (as was seen frequently during 1998 1999), in which case the failure to provide useable equipment may represent a serious management failing.

The leg injuries indicate that the victim was not lying down to expose the mine and so was in breach of UN SOPs, but not in breach of the demining NGO's unofficial variations to those requirements. The failure of the UN MAC to either listen to field feedback and adapt SOPs for local conditions, or enforce their own standards may be seen as a management failing.

The political situation in Afghanistan at the time this data was gathered limited access by the accident investigation team.

The photograph here shows Afghan 3mm visors that are old and brittle (polycarbonate hardens with prolonged UV exposure).



The agency that was used to make investigations for the UN MAC (based in Pakistan) at this time was frequently constrained by lack of funds, staff and transport. At times their movement was constrained by safety concerns. As a result, investigations were frequently delayed by weeks, meaning that an assessment of the site at the time of the accident was impossible.