

DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 11/07/2011	Accident number: 743
Accident time: 07:40	Accident Date: 11/10/2007
Where it occurred: Bint Jbeil	Country: Lebanon
Primary cause: Victim inattention (?)	Secondary cause: Other (?)
Class: Handling accident	Date of main report: 16/12/2009
ID original source: None	Name of source: Press
Organisation: [Name removed]	Ground condition: not recorded
Mine/device: M77 submunition	Date last modified: 11/07/2011
Date record created:	No of documents: 1
No of victims: 1	

Map details

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

Accident Notes

inadequate investigation (?)
no independent investigation available (?)
protective equipment not worn (?)

Accident report

The only report of this incident available to date is compiled from press reports. The compilation is reproduced below, edited for anonymity. This report will be extended when more information is made available.

11th October 2009 Lebanon

A photograph showed the Victim squatting in desert with a white Ebinger-420 metal-detector.

Lebanon blast death of bomb expert

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

An "exceptional" bomb disposal expert died when he was trying to get rid of a cluster bomb in Lebanon.

The Victim was trying to dispose of an M77 submunition when it exploded, an inquest heard.

[The Victim] was working on a M77 submunition near Bint Jbeil on 11 October 2007 when the bomb exploded. He was trying to remove the part of the mine that made it functional.

[The Victim] "...was a supervisor of the team and went to work on an ongoing site and while he was conducting the clearance he had an accident with a cluster bomb," a spokeswoman for the UN Mine Action Co-ordination Centre (MACC) said. "We do not know yet if he stepped on the cluster bomb or there was an accident while dismantling it," she said.

The 36-year-old, a soldier with the Royal Engineers for more than 17 years. After leaving the Army he worked as an instructor in bomb disposal and had been in Lebanon for a month, working for [Demining group] clearing mines and unexploded bombs, when he was killed.

An inquest held yesterday in [place removed], heard that [the Victim] was trying to remove part of the device that made it functional when the accident happened on October 11, 2007 – the day after his birthday.

Post-mortem tests revealed that he died as a result of blast injuries.

RAF bomb disposal expert Squadron Leader [Name removed] told the inquest the method of bomb disposal, called render safe, was used only when the level of threat was "serious, grave and immediate". [Name removed] said he did not want to speculate why the bomb went off but said a number of factors could have contributed, such as the weather conditions or sand or grit caught in the device.

[The coroner] recorded a narrative verdict: "[The Victim] died while attempting to render safe an unexploded bomb," she said. "It exploded while he was carrying out this procedure."

After the inquest, [Demining group] director of ordnance management [Name removed] said [the Victim], a battle area clearance team leader, was deployed to Lebanon in September 2007. He said the bomb [the Victim] was trying to dispose of was dropped by Israeli forces during the 2006 war with Hezbollah.

A spokesman for [Demining group] said at the time: "[the Victim] was a shining example of those who work in this highly-dangerous field, without whom local communities are unable to rebuild their lives safely and confidently following armed conflict. Although he had only been with us for a short time, he had proved himself highly capable, an excellent leader and was well-liked and respected."

Victim Report

Victim number: 934	Name: [Name removed]
Age: 36	Gender: Male
Status: supervisory	Fit for work: DECEASED
Compensation: Not made available	Time to hospital: Not made available
Protection issued: Not recorded	Protection used: Not recorded

Summary of injuries:

FATAL

COMMENT: No Medical report was made available. No details of the injuries were recorded.

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as *Victim inattention* because it seems that the Victim was trying to disarm an M77, which is not generally accepted as a necessary risk to take. When the device must be moved, the norm is to render it safe with a “gag” over the arming slide to prevent it sliding out (using adhesive tape) before moving it. If the device has armed, the convention is to destroy it where it is. Because no information about the context of the accident is available, it is not possible to judge whether movement of the device was necessary. The secondary cause is listed as *Other* because there may have been circumstances surrounding the accident that are not yet clear.

The only photograph of the Victim showed him with a detector in Lebanon and not wearing PPE. There is a convention among some EOD techs to avoid wearing PPE in hazardous circumstances, so it is possible that the Victim was not wearing PPE when the accident occurred.

The “Inadequate investigation” listed under notes refers to the absence of a full accident report.