

DDAS Accident Report

Accident details

Report date: 19/07/2011	Accident number: 779
Accident time: 09:53	Accident Date: 22/03/2007
Where it occurred: Nr Nunavil West, Thenmaradichi District, Jaffna Province, see detailed map reference	Country: Sri Lanka
Primary cause: Field control inadequacy (?)	Secondary cause: Management/control inadequacy (?)
Class: Demolition accident	Date of main report: 24/03/2007
ID original source: None	Name of source: Demining group
Organisation: [Name removed]	
Mine/device: Fuze	Ground condition: agricultural (recent) demolition site (explosives)
Date record created:	Date last modified: 19/07/2011
No of victims: 1	No of documents: 1

Map details

Longitude:	Latitude:
Alt. coord. system: IMASA [Sic]	Coordinates fixed by: GPS
Map east: 404.766.00 E	Map north: 1,068.649.00 N
Map scale: Chavakachcheri	Map series: ABMP
Map edition: 01	Map sheet: 4
Map name: 1:50000	

Accident Notes

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

Accident report

The only report of this accident that has been made available to date is an IMSMA "tick-box" record. Its conversion into a DDAS file has led to some of the original formatting being lost. Text in square brackets [] is editorial. This record will be revised if more information becomes available.

The document is reproduced below, edited for anonymity.

IMSMA record extracts

Task: EOD task

Place of accident: field [GPS recorded] near residential buildings

Cause of accident: "Misjudgment of effectiveness of protective work."

Reference to inquiry report

I have been to the particular spot together with the Programme Manger and Technical Advisor from [other Demining group]. I explained the whole flow of the task, where we we found it, where we moved it, position of all personnel during the demolition etc I have also giving them all my records of timings and a narrative as below including pictures and a movie of the demolition.

Accident description:

"The day of the accident [Dmeining group] was out in the field to do EOD tasks, UXO clearance on request by DMAO of objects not safe to move or transport. This particular day [Demining group] had planned to do 5 task but ended up in doing one more task, so totally 6 objects/UXOs was destroyed. All tasks was already surveyed and prepared for demolition, protective work etc.

The accident demolition was the first that day in a row of six demolitions. The target was a 120mm artillery shell. Beforehand we had digged a 1.1 m deep pit away from the closest village and had sandbagged the side towards the village. The shell was moved from where it was found, by hand, into the pit just prior to setting up the demolition. The shell was by purpose put closer to the wall in the pit that faced the village. When every thing was set up and sentries were in place we carried out the demolition. The shell went high order. I could short after - few seconds hear a few falling fragmentations around the firing point. I went forward alone to inspect the demolition pit and gave all clear. On my way back to the firing point the QA officer approached me and said that one of the deminers was injured, we walked or to that position. The deminer was already taken care of by the medic. I was told that one FALLING fragmentation (NOT DIRECT) had hit him on his left shoulder, right on to the collar bone. There was three scratches or small cuts in the skin. The deminer was conscious the whole time and said he had pain. When we came carried on to the next task and had done the preparations, the deminer asked for permission to go to hospital as his shoulder / upper arm was numb. I asked him and the medic if it could wait until we reached the next task and could send him with another team's truck so we could go on with the prepared and coming demolition. They agreed so we carried on. When coming to the location of the truck I arranged for the deminer to be transported to the hospital. After that I WAS TOLD that they cleaned some sand out of the small cuts and X-rayed him (See medical report). He was released from hospital after one day of observation. The accident is reported to the police in Chavakachcheri as well.

Device: 120mm artillery shell.

Victim did not wear Protective equipment.

Victim Report

Victim number: 965	Name: [Name removed]
Age: 22	Gender: Male
Status: deminer	Fit for work: presumed
Compensation: Not made available	Time to hospital: 90 minutes
Protection issued: Frontal apron Long visor	Protection used: None

Summary of injuries:

INJURIES: minor Shoulder

COMMENT: No Medical report was made available. "Small cuts".

Analysis

The primary cause of this accident is listed as a *Field Control Inadequacy* because the Victim was in range of shrapnel from the demolition, was not wearing PPE and was not taking cover. The person with field responsibility should have ensured that he was. The secondary cause is listed as a *Management Control Inadequacy* because it seems that the accident was treated as "unavoidable", which implies that the system in use was approved by the management and no need to make changes was recognised.

The delay in sending the Victim to hospital after he reported that his arm was numb cannot be excused by having a lot of other tasks to get done and implies considerable irresponsibility on the part of the ex-patriot field supervisor responsible.

With no report other than the notoriously inadequate IMSMA form, it is not clear whether the demining group drew any conclusions from the accident.

IMSMA accident records have always been over-simplified and entirely "Inadequate" for use in determining causes and so deriving any useful lessons from the events. The UN supported MAC in Sri Lanka has generally failed to conduct independent investigations and has failed (despite requests) to make any available records available to the DDAS, so ignoring the requirements of the IMAS.

The Demining group involved in this accident is thanked for its transparency in making their record available.