

South Sudan 24th September 2009**Field Operations Stockpile Disposal September 2009 - Barry Jolly, Technical Advisor**

After a long delay DDG were finally giving authority to conduct demolitions on stockpiles around Eastern Equatoria on the 14th September 2009. To gain this authority it required the Operations Manager (Phil Sullivan) to set up meetings with UNMAO, SSDC and SPLA to discuss how it would best be executed. It was decided that a verification committee had to be formed and would comprise of two SPLA soldiers and one officer. Also accompanying this verification committee there would be a SSDC representative and a TA/OM from DDG. On the 24th July the inspection started with the focus on three stockpiles in Magwi County. These were Kit, Magwi School and Agoro trench lines. All agencies were happy with the outcome of the checks and it was decided that DDG field operations would start to clear the stockpiles upon their return in September. Due to the weather, road conditions and distances DDG could only deal with three stockpiles efficiently, those being Kit, Magwi School, and Agoro trench line.

A plan was made to destroy all three stockpiles within the month of September. TA's and OM knew that the time allocated to complete the task would be tight, because not only was the stockpiles being destroyed, there was also the compulsory refresher training which had to be conducted after a long stand down in accordance with National Technical Standard Guidelines (NTSGs). Two EOD teams were also going to be moving north to Mundri to start to prepare for another project involving the disposal of sub-munitions.

On the 14th September we had completed the move to Mundri and had completed the refresher training as planned and it was now time for the remaining teams to concentrate on the stockpiles. The EOD Supervisor and I sat down to discuss where to start. It was decided that we would tackle the Kit stockpile first as there is a school and a community center within 20m of the stockpile. All items were assessed and apart from two they were all deemed safe to move. Teams 2 and 3 then moved all safe to move items to Kit Central Disposal Site (CDS) for destruction. (Photo showing mortars being prepared for demolition).



On the 15th September, Wani Chaplin (National EOD Supervisor), Data James (Team leader) and I along with all team members were at the Kit CDS to conduct the first of 3 demolitions. Data James took control of the EOD teams and put into action the demolitions plan. The teams took around 4 hours to conduct mandatory safety briefings, dig pits, place items of UXO in pits and finally place charges. With all sentries in place Data completed his final check of all areas over the radio net and was happy that it was now safe to connect the electric detonator which would be the method used to initiate the demolition. After the connection of the detonator Data moved to the firing point situated 1km from the demolitions pit, and conducted a final communications check with all sentries to make sure the area was safe and clear from all local personnel. The reply came back that all areas were clear. Data then made sure all sentries were in cover and gave the order that he was preparing to fire the demolition using the Beethoven firing

device. "Demolition in 5,4,3,2,1". There was a loud and reassuring bang, telling Data, Wani and I that it was a successful demolition. "All call signs - all personnel stay in cover" was passed over the radio net by Data. This is normal procedure before the Team Leader and TA approaches the demolitions pits; on the way to the pits we were checking for smoke or anything out of the ordinary. On arrival at the pits it was clear to see by the ground and after final checks that all items appeared to have been destroyed. Sentries were then called in and pits were dug back out to verify successful demolition of all items and so that all scrap could be moved from the demolitions area to the Explosive Ordnance (EO) scrap storage area.

The 16th September saw the teams carry out the same actions under Data and supervised by myself. Another successful demolition had been conducted. (Picture left showing one of the pits being prepared for demolition).



The two remaining items of ERW (Explosive Remnants of War) that were deemed unsafe to move were destroyed by the teams. The method of disposal would be the same apart from the necessary protective works to prevent blast or fragmentation damage to the nearby buildings. This was due to the close proximity of the school, community center, and the village population. The plan was quickly formulated, that one team would conduct and control the evacuation and place sentries, whilst the other team would concentrate on the protective works and the demolition. This worked well and the demolition was carried out with as little disruption to the

community as possible. In those two days, the two EOD teams had destroyed over 400 items of UXO. This had drastically reduced the UXO threat to the community of Kit, and allowed the children of Kit School a safe and secure environment from the threat of ERW to continue with their education.

On the 17th September Magwi School was to be the focus of DDG next task. There had been over 300 items of UXO in an old disused school building directly behind a functional more modern school. However from a subsequent SPLA inspection the majority of items had been removed by a local SPLA commander, leaving only 80 items of UXO most of which were unfired 120mm mortars. After meeting with local dignities and the head master of the school, all items were moved around 6km out of Magwi to DDG's CDS where they would be destroyed. This time the demolition would be conducted by Murjan James (Team 3) with Team 2 in support along with the EOD National Supervisor and I present in overall control of the demolition. Like the previous three demolitions this one was also conducted in accordance with DDG Standard Operational Procedures (SOP's). It was a good day for all involved, not only had we carried out a successful demolition but we had yet again reduced the ERW threat and made the Magwi School safe for the children and community. (Picture showing EOD team preparing Safe to Move UXO for demolition)



With Kit and Magwi stockpiles complete it was time to now look at Agoro trench line. This stockpile would be difficult for a few reasons. One - it takes 3hrs to get there. Two - we could not destroy it in situ because of the proximity of the local communities and their house due to the type and quantity of UXO (mainly 120mm High Explosive mortars). Three - we would have to move all the items and the time was already tight. On the 18th September we traveled to Agoro with plans that had to be put in place before the demolition or removal process could start. The first task would be to speak with all local dignities outlining the coming days plan and to ask their approval to use land for a CDS. Also because of the time that the stockpile had been lying there the condition of all items had to be assessed and sorted out into piles of safe to move, unsafe to move, fused and unfused and any that had no explosive fill.

With the area for the CDS confirmed and the teams under my control we started to move the UXO to the CDS. It was decided that 50 of the 120mm mortars with end caps removed would be taken first. This was to see if the explosive fill had degraded in any way which would have meant an unsuccessful demolition. However the high explosive filling was still in good condition and the demolition was very successful. (Picture below showing demolition area and pits had been filled in and remedial work completed).



Whilst at Agoro the teams were directed to a POMZ AP Mine (Soviet mine with fuse and arming pin still intact) which we dealt with by blowing in situ due to its rusted state.

The OM and I came up with a time saving plan of action. The plan was to cut down on traveling time to Agoro (at this point it was three days work) by moving all remaining items from Agoro to Kit CDS. This would mean that the EOD teams would only have a 20min drive to the CDS and therefore giving more time for demolitions and to address any problems that may arise. With the DDG truck called into action the remaining items were moved

to Kit. It was decided to conduct one demolition with the UXO split between pre prepared pits because of the quantity of explosives involved.

On the 21st of September (last day of deployment) the final demolition was complete and the Agoro stockpile was no more. The two EOD Teams at Kit from the 15th of September to the 21st September had destroyed over 700 items of UXO.