

Findings of the Air Force EOD Disposal Shot Accident Released

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Joint Base Balad, Iraq Air Force EOD personnel assigned to the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing carried out a non-emergency disposal operation to dispose of 35 M1028 anti-personnel tank cartridges back in September. The disposal shot involved nineteen non-EOD airman acting as observers. The disposal shot caused the death of one of the observers, Senior Airman James Hansen, after he was struck by a base plate from one of the projectiles.

The from Air Force Materiel Command released the results of their investigation and concluded the following:

- The detonation used three times the permissible amount of explosives.
- The base plates of the M1028 tank cartridges being detonated pointed at the troops, not away from them.
- The disposal shot was initiated on level ground instead of in a trench.
- The observers were too close to the blast, standing in a concrete shelter 770 feet away instead of the 2,092 feet required for M1028 rounds; the shelter, built before American forces arrived in 2003, does not provide frontal protection for anyone in its northeast side.

As a result of the accident, the EOD flight operating instructions are being rewritten and no non-emergency controlled detonations will be conducted until the instruction is complete and approved.