

Explosion on the Pedemontana construction site

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On Thursday, 25 October, at around 9.45 pm, **there was such a loud explosion that broke the windows of many houses in Lozza**, and could be heard kilometres away.

Within minutes, the switchboards of emergency assistance and fire brigade were inundated. It was a hectic night on the construction site of the Pedemontana motorway, beside Provincial Road No. 57.

And in all likelihood, the reason was the disposal of detonators of the mines used for the excavations.

A SCHEDULED EXPLOSION – It was dinnertime, when an explosive charge went off, as often happens on the building site in Lozza, preceded by sirens.

They call them “scheduled” explosion; local residents have become used to them, they almost don’t even notice.

THE RUMBLE – But shortly after 9.30 p.m., the village was shaken by a powerful rumble.

The window of the houses in Via Piave and Via Pravallo were shattered. Even the doors of garages were knocked off their hinges. There were people in the street, with frightened expressions, and mobile phones in their hands.

THE ALARM – A number of calls were received by the Varesenews editorial office. “Hurry, the building site has blown up.” Calls were also received by the fire service and the general emergency numbers.

THE RESPONSE – Several fire brigade vehicles (in the photo taken at 10 p.m.), the Military Police and the State Police arrived at the site, in addition to the civil defence from Lozza. The area was fenced off and the construction site was lit to allow an investigation of what had happened. An emergency response vehicle and an ambulance also arrived, as a precaution.

WHAT HAPPENED – Only at around 10.30 p.m. could a reconstruction of the events be made. It was probably in order to dispose of some detonators that a number of workers at the excavation site dug a hole. It was a few metres outside the tunnel, right under a huge mechanical arm of a digger. It appears that the team of workers had followed the safety procedures, placing the explosive in the hole, and moving away to avoid the debris from the explosion. It was a kind of scheduled explosion, but with the sole purpose of disposing of the explosive. At this point, there was the explosion, which broke the windows of houses a hundred meters away. The construction site is situated in a huge valley that is, in part, natural, and in part, the result of the digging that has levelled the surface where the stretch of new road will pass. The pressure wave that followed must have been frightening, as it caused damage a hundred metres away. A number of people have sworn that they heard the explosion not only in Gazzada, but in Azzate, too.

THE INVESTIGATIONS – In the evening, Varese's Chief of Police, Danilo Gagliardi, also visited the site, and the magistrate on duty was informed. During the night, the forensic team carried out a survey, to establish the causes of the incident. The area of the construction site was not sequestered. There was also damage at the spot where the explosion took place. A number of machines were dented, and a pit was left that was about three metres in diameter.

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