SAFE PASSAGE

A Newsletter for the Public-Private Partnership Community

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Partners gather for a briefing on humanitarian mine action during the partnership workshop.

PM/WRA's Public-Private Partnership Workshop

By Stacy Davis, PM/WRA

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us on February 9-11 for our first ever workshop on public-private partnerships. It was a great success – getting people together, exchanging information, learning new things, and charting a course for the future. Over 80 people attended, representing a wide variety of non-governmental and civic groups, schools, national governments, and international organizations. We know it was an intense three days, and we are very grateful for everyone's candid comments and commitment to both the partnership program and mine action.

Meeting our interagency colleagues and learning how the different parts of the U.S. Government work to support mine action was important, and we hope you also valued learning about the other responsibilities of PM/WRA, particularly with respect to illicitly trafficked small arms and light weapons, including Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS).

Mostly, however, we wanted to hear your ideas for new initiatives and ways to better promote and harmonize mine action programs. The suggestions you made helped us outline some short, medium and long-term goals for ourselves.

Already, we have created a website as a record of the workshop (http://maic.jmu.edu/partnership/) and launched the Partnership ListServ (both thanks to the MAIC at JMU), and met with the European Union about collaborating to promote awareness and private funding for mine action. In response to your comments at the workshop, we included a new matching grant program as part of our recent request for grant applications.

We are continuing to investigate other new initiatives, including supporting the creation of a humanitarian mine action consortium and organizing a Midwest regional conference in the fall to include some of the novel elements you identified (e.g., PR and media training, public awareness and fundraising components). We will also turn the workshop website into a permanent partnership tool, to include information on partner activities, scheduled events, and funding opportunities, etc. Longer term, we intend to work this fall with other governments and the UN to create an International Landmine Awareness Day, beginning in 2006. Expect to hear more about these initiatives via the ListServ.

We want to keep the lines of communication open so we can be as helpful and supportive as possible. Please keep in touch, keep us informed, and let us know how we can continue to serve you in this shared effort to make the world safer from landmines and small arms and light weapons.

Rotarians to Meet June 19th in Chicago to Plan Mine Action Projects

By Sally Mackle, Rotary Club of Seattle

On June 19th, one day before the 100th Anniversary Rotary International Conference convenes in Chicago, Rotarians from around the world will meet to learn more about the horror of landmines and what they can do to mitigate this humanitarian problem.

Sponsored by District 5030 of Rotary International (Greater Seattle area) and the Fellowship of Rotarians for Mine Action, this networking meeting is expected to draw more than 250 people for a morning of both discussion and action. Rotarians involved with mine action projects will team with NGOs to provide in-depth information to Rotarians new to mine action. Meeting in small groups, discussions will center around landmine action, mine risk education, survivors' assistance, and economic re-development.

At the end of the morning, participants will fill out a "Rotary Mine Action Plan" with an outline of how they plan to work with their club to develop and fund a project. Each attendee will go home with a DVD developed specifically for Rotarians that tells the story of mine action and shows Rotarians discussing their mine action projects. Rotarians will also have a chance to meet NGO reps and learn more about their organizations.

Please spread the word in your city about this important event. Call the president of a Rotary club in your area and ask that they send someone to this meeting. We also welcome any NGO involved with mine action to attend. You may register on line at www.rfma.org.

Two Giant Steps to a Safer World

U.S. Department of State

Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice and Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov at the signing of an accord on MANPADS in Bratislava, Slovakia.

By John Stevens, PMA/WRA

Efforts to reduce the threats from illicitly-trafficked and poorly secured small arms and light weapons, including Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) that could endanger global aviation, got two boosts early this year. First, on February 18, the United States and its NATO allies launched a Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative to help Ukraine destroy 133,000 tons of munitions and 1.5 million small arms and light weapons, including MANPADS, that are in excess of Ukraine's defense needs. Then, on February 24, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signed an Arrangement between the United States and Russia to cooperate on enhancing control of MANPADS, commonly described as shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles. In both cases, the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement was the lead at the U.S. Department of State to coordinate this vital work.

The NATO-PfP project in Ukraine will span twelve years and involve about $27 million in donor contributions. The United States is leading phase one of the project that begins this spring, at a cost of over $8.5 million. Ukraine will cover most of the operational and in-kind demilitarization costs. As the lead nation for phase one, the U.S. made an initial contribution of over $1.6 million. Contributions for this project are being accepted from all nations and organizations, even if they are not associated with NATO.

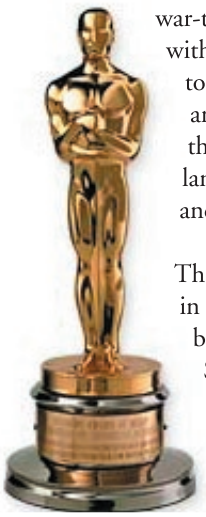
The U.S.-Russia Arrangement on MANPADS provides a framework for cooperation to keep shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles out of the hands of criminals, terrorists and other non-state actors. The Arrangement will facilitate the destruction of MANPADS that are obsolete or in excess of legitimate defense requirements. It will also enable the U.S. and Russia to share information about MANPADS sales and transfers to third countries. Visit www.state.gov/t/pm/wra to learn more about both of these exciting initiatives

Freedom Fields and the Oscars

Star Power Propels Freedom Fields USA Into The Spotlight

By Erin Clark,
Freedom Fields Board Member

Among the glitz and glamour of the Academy Awards, one humble piece of jewelry sparkled with heart and purpose. Freedom Fields USA, a non-profit group working to remove landmines in war-torn Cambodia, partnered with silver designer Pat Areias to create unique bracelets and necklaces symbolizing the ongoing effort to clear landmines from Cambodia and other parts of the world.



Oscar Statuette © AMPAS ®

The bracelets were included in an Academy Award gift bag given away at the Four Seasons Resort on Oscar night. Included in the beautifully presented velvet pouch was a personal note from Dina Eastwood, a Freedom Fields board member. The opportunity to take the Freedom Fields' message to this important audience was greatly appreciated, but as the necklaces and bracelets so artfully represent, this grassroots battle will be won one landmine at a time.

Crafted in sterling silver, the pendants are a rough representation of a landmine. They are available as a necklace or a bracelet and can be worn individually or in multiples. Either way, they represent a concrete commitment to remove landmines and to help families thousands of miles away. With each necklace and bracelet sold, Freedom Fields USA is able to remove one landmine.

Freedom Fields USA has supported the clearance of over 2000 landmines and other remnants of war in Cambodia's K-5 mine belt, allowing 163 families to return to the land, plant crops and raise their children in safety.

© Freedom Fields

A close-up shot of a Freedom Fields necklace.

Freedom Fields USA is grateful to Pat Areias Sterling Silver, with shops in Carmel, Beverly Hills, Las Vegas, and New York, for their generous help in creating and selling these pendants of hope. The necklaces and bracelets are available at Pat Areias boutiques or on-line at www.freedomfieldsusa.org.

Global Care Unlimited Youth Ambassadors Tour Cambodia With Clear Path International

By Mark Hyman, Chairman, President and Executive Director (Global Care Unlimited, Inc.)

In February 2005, teacher Mark Hyman and a Youth Delegation from Global Care Unlimited joined James and Terri Hathaway of Clear Path International on a tour of Cambodia. This journey was part of Global Care's Cambodian Humanitarian Initiative, which seeks to educate American communities about the humanitarian needs of Cambodia and to provide support to alleviate these conditions. The Global Care delegation visited organizations addressing a wide variety of issues with an aim to research their work and establish partnerships. Among the organizations visited were the Angkor Hospital for Children; the Cambodian Master Performers Program (revival of classical Cambodian performing arts); Clear Path International/Cambodian Volunteers for Community Development (CVCD, vocational training center for landmine survivors and their families); and Mines Advisory Group (MAG, mine detection and removal).

© Global Care Unlimited

Youth Delegation from Global Care Unlimited at Angkor Wat.

The Global Care delegation was particularly excited to visit the rehabilitation site of Clear Path/CVCD, which Global Care Unlimited had helped fund in 2004. The students learned firsthand about the excellent rehabilitation programs offered for landmine survivors and their families. They also appreciated the opportunity to visit the MAG training site and learn about the different stages of mine detection and removal. In addition, the Global Care delegation learned about the Khmer Rouge genocide with a visit to Tuol Sleng and the Ek Choueng Killing Fields.

Global Care extends its deep gratitude to James, Martha and Terri of Clear Path International for organizing and guiding this spectacular journey through Cambodia. For more information about the trip, contact Mark Hyman at mhyman@globalcareunlimited.org. To read the students' journals, go to www.cpi.org/cpiblog and click on "Tenafly 2005."

Tsunamis, Flooding and Floating Landmines

By Colonel Allan R. Vosburgh, Assistant Director for Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD), Humanitarian Demining Technology and Munitions - Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict

Following the December tsunami in South Asia, media reports of displaced landmines in Sri Lanka generated great concern. The effects of moving water and erosion on landmines has been an issue in a number of places around the world, including Vietnam, Korea, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mozambique, and Jordan, where mines were moved or buried due to flooding from natural disasters.

In general, following serious flooding, mines, particularly small plastic anti-personnel mines, can become dislodged and moved from their original location. However, flooding from hurricanes and typhoons, such as in Nicaragua and Honduras in 1998, Vietnam in 1999, and Mozambique in 2000-2003, have shown that fear, driven by media reports, is often a bigger challenge than landmines. Hurricane Mitch buried mines in Honduras and Nicaragua under heavy layers of silt and debris, but the problem was not as widespread as first reported. Similar concerns in Vietnam and Mozambique proved to be less severe than initially reported in the media.

The recent tsunami moved some small mines and light unexploded ordnance within existing suspect areas of coastal Sri Lanka, but the majority of minefields are well away from the coast. By all reports, there have been few displaced mines discovered outside known danger areas. The real impact of displaced mines has not been injuries or deaths, but slowing of relief or reconstruction efforts due to fear on the part of relief workers. Local people know areas to avoid, but it is outsiders who may be at risk due to the destruction of warning signs and markers.

Following Hurricane Mitch, the U.S. provided technology to assist Honduras with elimination of deeply buried or displaced mines, particularly those so deeply buried that they could no longer be detected

U.S. Department of State

HALO Trust using a Volvo Front End Loader, armored and modified by them, to clear tsunami debris near Jaffria, Sri Lanka, shortly after the December '04 disaster.

by either mine detectors or mine detecting dogs. The U.S. produced, tested, and delivered a prototype mechanical system called a Sifting Excavator to address this specific problem, contributing to Honduras becoming "mine-safe" in 2004. Other U.S. technology is being tested in suspect areas of Nicaragua, advancing knowledge of what works in similar situations. As Sri Lanka emerges from this disaster, the United States Demining Technology Program is prepared to do its best to assist with any additional landmine or UXO challenges.

A Once in a Lifetime Experience

By Sally Bader Mackle (smackle@wcit.org), Rotary Club of Seattle
(Shortened version of story in the Rotarians for Mine Action Newsletter)

U.S. Department of State

Seattle Rotarian Sally Mackle presenting a plaque to the village chief during the ceremony for the opening of the school in the village of Ou Chambok in Cambodia. The school was built from funds raised from 18 Rotary Clubs in the United States and Australia.

It was a six and one-half hour drive over some of the worst roads in Cambodia, but for the ten Rotarians bumping down them in November 2004, it was a trip of a lifetime to see two villages along the Thai-Cambodian border demined with funding from our Seattle, Washington District. The villages are located in the middle of the largest minefield in the world, the "K-5 mine belt," laid after Pol Pot's forces were pushed out of Cambodia and into Thailand. It failed to keep the Khmer Rouge out, and on their return, they emplaced additional mines. Twenty-five years later, these mines are killing and maiming villagers.

Sixteen Rotary Clubs in District 5030 (the greater Seattle area), the Lampton Club in New South Wales, Australia, and the Central Rotary Club of Marin, California, joined forces to raise more than $50,000 to demine two sections of K-5, with funds left over to build three wells for one village and a school for another. The HALO Trust was our implementing partner. After our group toured the minefield, we visited the two "Rotary" villages.

Free of landmines, the new village of Ta Saen was taking shape with several new houses, a new well, and soybeans drying on the ground. A few miles farther, Rotary-funded demining in the village of Ou Chambok had doubled the amount of land available for farming; the new schoolhouse was the largest building in the village. We arrived home in time for our American Thanksgiving. Of all that we had to be thankful for, through Rotary and our partner, HALO Trust, we were grateful for the opportunity to bring lifesaving changes to the families of Ta Saen and Ou Chambok.

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Spotlight on Our HMA Team

Colonel Stuart Harris, USMC, Deputy Director for the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA), oversees our humanitarian mine action program. Colonel Harris comes to us after serving as a Marine Corps Battalion Commander in Operation Iraqi Freedom and a year at the National Defense University.

H.M. "Murf" McCloy, Jr., Senior Demining Advisor, has been involved in State Department demining programs since April 1996. Currently, he serves as the Program Manager of the Quick Reaction Demining Force (QRDF) and demining programs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro; in addition, he serves as Global Demining Coordinator, conducting liaison with the World Bank, UN and other international and regional organizations on humanitarian mine action.

Dennis Hadrick, Program Manager, assumed his current position in 1998. In May 2005, his specific areas of program responsibility will be Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq and Yemen.

Matt Murphy, Program Manager, has been with PM/WRA since 1999. His areas of responsibility are Sudan, Eritrea, Lebanon, and Tajikistan.

Deborah Netland, a Program Manager in PM/WRA since 1998, currently manages programs for Angola, Chad, Mozambique and Sri Lanka.

Richard G. "Dick" Stickels Jr., Program Manager, joined the team in 1998, with responsibility for the oversight of the resource management, grants and contracts.

Ed Trimakas joined our office in 1998. He manages programs in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam as well as Latin America and the Organization of American States countries.

United States Department of State Mine Action Partners

Adopt-A-Minefield ▼ Canadian Landmine Foundation ▼ Center for Int'l Rehabilitation ▼ Center for Teaching Int'l Relations ▼ Chicago Coalition for Landmine Action ▼ Children of Armenia Fund ▼ Clear Path International ▼ C King Associates ▼ Cranfield University ▼ Danish Church Aid ▼ DC Comics ▼ Freedom Fields ▼ Geneva Int'l Center for Humanitarian Demining ▼ Global Care Unlimited ▼ Golden West Foundation ▼ Grapes for Humanity ▼ HALO Trust ▼ Handicap International - France ▼ Health Volunteers Overseas ▼ Help Handicapped International ▼ Humpty Dumpty Institute ▼ International Trust Fund ▼ Julia Burke Foundation ▼ Kids First Vietnam ▼ Landmine Survivors Network ▼ Landmines Blow! ▼ Lipscomb University ▼ Marshall Legacy Institute ▼ Medical Care Development International ▼ Messiah College ▼ Mine Action Information Center ▼ Mines Advisory Group ▼ Newsweek Education Program ▼ Olive Branch Society ▼ One Sri Lanka Foundation ▼ Organization of American States ▼ Pan American Health Organization ▼ Peace Trees Vietnam ▼ People to People International ▼ Polus Center ▼ Prestige Health Care Technologies ▼ Prosthetics Outreach Foundation ▼ Roots of Peace ▼ Rose Charities ▼ Rotarians for Mine Action ▼ Save the Children ▼ SFLAG ▼ Southwest Missouri State University ▼ Spirit of Soccer ▼ Students Partnership Worldwide ▼ Survey Action Center ▼ United Nations Foundation ▼ UNDP ▼ UNICEF ▼ UNMAS ▼ Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation ▼ Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund ▼ Warner Bros. ▼ World Rehabilitation Fund