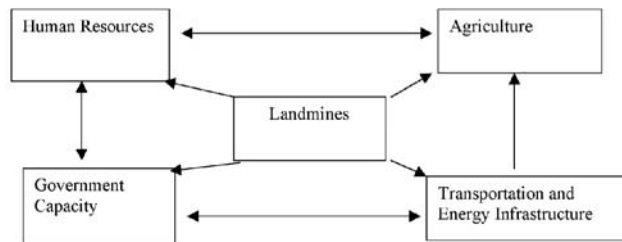


## DEMINING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Preventing the tragic human psychosocial and physical consequences of landmine accidents is reason enough to support humanitarian demining. But the far-reaching consequences of demining on national economic reconstruction are sometimes overlooked. Unfortunately, poverty and landmines go hand in hand in the countries with the greatest number of landmines (Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan and Vietnam.)

Recognizing the links between landmines and poverty, the United Nations encourages governments to "incorporate a strategic plan for mine action in the national development plan and poverty reduction strategies."



### HUMAN RESOURCES.

The waste of human potential due to landmines has many dimensions. Obviously the assessment and removal of hidden landmines reduces casualties and injuries. In Cambodia for example, 50 people a month are killed or injured by a detonation. Landmines also drive refugees from their land, thereby generating large-scale unemployment. One in three landmines injures a child. As the most vulnerable members of society, children pay the price for landmines in other ways. If a principle breadwinner has been injured, the burden of economic survival falls on the remaining family members, which can keep children from attending school. Landmines often interfere with the establishment of local schools for rural populations, making it much harder for families to educate their children.

**GOVERNMENT CAPACITY.** Landmine injuries seriously burden local public health infrastructure, diverting resources from other basic primary health services, such as maternal health and vaccinations. The medical expertise and the level of technology needed to deal with landmine injuries is extremely high and paying western medical experts is expensive in the context of the local economy. Without programs for the reintegration of landmine victims into the local economy, landmine victims and their dependents will end up depending on government for assistance. The younger the victim, the longer the government must support them and the more complex and expensive the treatment. By limiting the availability of drinking water and crowding

1 Demining and Economic Development

2 Mine Clearing in Croatia

4 A Once in a Lifetime Experience



6 Mineseeker Airborne Detection

7 Night of a Thousand Dinners

7 Upcoming Events

(Government Capacity continued)

people into refugee camps, landmines contribute to cholera and diarrhea outbreaks, further draining public health resources.



Landmines on roads and around civilian areas pose obvious further problems in the provision of other public services. Because they incite cycles of retribution and make patrolling difficult, landmines often impede the establishment of effective public security. For these reasons, local governments are usually the principle stakeholders and partners in the demining process.

**AGRICULTURE.** Demining helps to return economic value to land, thereby expanding land ownership and contributing to both commercial and personal asset accumulation. Even marked landmines decrease the value of agricultural land through trinitrotoluene (TNT) contamination and soil erosion while putting immense pressure on the available arable land, which tends to be over cultivated. Valuable livestock are also lost to landmines. Clearing landmines restores sustainable



local sources of food production, which in turn decreases dependency on international aid organizations and promotes social and political stability. Many governments make an

effort to return land in remote areas to independent agricultural producers. This is because for most of the countries involved, agriculture provides the main source of income for the majority of people. Up to 80% of the people in Cambodia are farmers. Landmines in water sources create ongoing difficulties for farmers and the food supply. According to the World Bank's assessment of the economic benefits of demining, the clearing of irrigation sources benefits the country 25 times the clearing of agricultural land and 250 times the clearing of grazing land.

**TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE.** Landmines on roads inhibit the development of motorized ground transportation, interfere with commercial networks for farmers and other independent producers and disrupt the delivery of foreign aid and the movement of refugees. The construction or reconstruction of power lines is time-consuming. Through their effects on transportation particular, landmines rob communities of tourism business, an important source of national revenue for developing countries.

Eradication of landmines is the first step on the road to individual and national economic independence and an indispensable initial link in a chain to put human and capital assets to productive use.

## MINE CLEARING IN CROATIA



*Heidi Kuhn, Tom Whelan, and Chuck Stuckey, members of the Rotary Club of San Rafael at the sign showing that their Club's fundraising paid for the clearing of this minefield in Karlovac, Croatia.*

Several years ago, through the inspiration of our members, Heidi Kuhn and Ann Lawrence, the Rotary Club of San Rafael began a project to raise funds for mine clearing in Croatia. By mid 2003 we had raised over \$41,000 in cooperation with the mine clearing charity, Roots of Peace. Originally, we endeavored to obtain matching funds from our Rotary District and from International, but we subsequently learned that such funds were not available for mine clearance. Since we had already raised the money with the promise of mine clearing, we transferred the funds to the Rotary Club of Karlovac for mine clearing in the city of Karlovac, Croatia. By the time it reached the Croatian Mine Clearing Authority, CROMAC, our contribution had

*(Mine Clearing in Croatia continued)*

increased to over \$123,000. It had been matched by the U.S. State Department through the International Trust Fund for Slovenia and again by the Croatian Government.

In early September, we heard that our funds were going to be used to clear an area near Karlovac, and the project would be starting around mid-month. Several of our club members started discussing how members of our Rotary Club might go to Croatia to see the result of our contributions. We were considering traveling to Croatia in mid-October.



On Monday, September 12, I opened my e-mail to a message from Heidi Kuhn, President of Roots of Peace and a member of our club. The message said that CNN-Europe wanted to do a feature story of Roots of Peace, including our project in Karlovac. They would have a crew on site September 21 –23. Heidi and her daughter, Kyleigh were going, as was Tom Whelan, a member of our club. Did my wife and I want to go? Hey, why not? All we had to do was clear our desks of a variety of projects, move around a bunch of meetings, figure out where we could lodge our 16 year old son, buy tickets and we were off. We departed early on Saturday, the 18<sup>th</sup>, for about 22 hours of flying time, to Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, via Los Angeles and Frankfurt, Germany.

During the days before we left, Heidi and I had sent numerous e-mails to different people in Croatia, alerting them to our arrival and about the CNN project. We were therefore delighted to be met at the airport by a delegation from CROMAC with cars to take us to the hotel. That was the one and only result of the e-mails.

The people that we met in Croatia, were, without exception, charming, intelligent, cooperative, and great fun. Despite our social and cultural differences we found wonderful commonalities with the people we met along the way. We had meetings with people in the upper levels of the Ministry of State to men clearing mines, to vintners in the field. All of the meetings involved more discussion about who, what, why, when, where and how than we are accustomed to in Marin County. It was really fun. Of course, I was mainly a spectator. Heidi Kuhn turned out to be very well

known in Croatia, as well as being very experienced and effective in dealing with government agencies, foreign and U.S. By the end of Monday, Heidi had gotten the cooperation of the Ministry of State, CROMAC, and the U.S. Ambassador to Croatia in facilitating the schedule for CNN, who arrived that evening. It was a wonderful performance, and she smiled all the way through.

The only group we had not made contact with was the local media. However, that evening, Tom Whelan and I attended the meeting of the Rotary Club of Zagreb Centar. It turned out that the president of that club was also one of the senior officers of the national TV company. During the meeting, he pulled out his cell phone and called his head of production. Within an hour or so, a news team was at the hotel, interviewing Heidi. The next morning we had plenty of local media around.

It was a great Rotary meeting and Tom and I made many good contacts. We did get off to a slow start though. Their club was supposed to meet at seven. At seven we were there, the waiters were there, the food was there, the wine was there, but the members weren't. They operated on Croatian time and arrived at around eight. Once they arrived, we had a good meeting. Almost everybody spoke fluent English. They explained that it was their custom to have cocktails and dinner before the meeting, and then have the meeting over after dinner wine. I don't know how much progress was made on the agenda, but we certainly had a good time.

On Tuesday, we convoyed out from the hotel to the offices of CROMAC. Six of us from San Rafael, the CNN crew, a foreign service officer from the US Embassy, two drivers, several CROMAC officials and a couple of cars of local media.



After the mandatory visit to their offices, we went into the field. During the Croatian-Serbian war, that ended in the mid-90's, the main fighting occurred on a battle line that extended from

the northern border of Croatia to the Adriatic Sea. The map of known and suspected mine fields generally follows this line. Using the mine records of the opposing armies and some sophisticated mapping programs donated by Autodesk, here in San Rafael, they have been able to eliminate many square miles of suspected fields, but they are now at a point where it is necessary to search the grounds physically. It is an expensive and time-consuming job, not to mention dangerous.

All suspected mine fields are marked with signs. When it comes time to do the clearing, the area to be cleared is delineated on high definition maps and a team moves in. First, mine clearing machinery covers the fields. These are armored, remote controlled vehicles ranging in size from that of a small tractor, to massive, tank-like constructs. The machines have a shielded attachment in the front that contains a spool of spinning chains. These chains dig up the earth to a depth of about 18", and create a lot of noise and vibration, effects that are designed to detonate mines. The machines are operated remotely from a distance of about 200 yards. The operator is encased in safety clothing, helmet and face-mask. Nearby waits an ambulance.

After the machines have chewed up the area, mine detecting dogs quarter the area, after the dogs, men, in shielded clothing take to the field. They search carefully with metal detectors and, as a last test, probes. If they locate metal, they must carefully probe the site to see if it might be a mine. If so, it is disposed of. They mark the area they have searched with flags, every couple of feet, so there is a clear definition between areas that have been cleared and those that have not been cleared.

In order to be certified as mine free the site is then tested by a team from CROMAC. If there is any metal detected at the site, it must be searched again. If all this searching and testing sounds dangerous, it is. Three Croatian deminers lost their lives this year alone.

We watched demonstrations of these techniques in the field next to the area we have funded. They demonstrated their techniques in a field that had already been certified as cleared as an actual clearing operation would have been incredibly dangerous for bystanders. Land mines can have an effective killing range of over 200 yards. Member of the Rotary Club of Karlovac told us of people walking on safe roads being injured by mines exploding in nearby fields and forests. The mines were being set off by wild animals walking or digging near the mines.

We walked up to the edge of the area of the clearing we have funded and saw the work that had been partially completed by the machines. The mine safety officials were very upset that such a large group of people was so close to a known mine field and they ordered us to back away. We did see the sign that said that this was our field. In Croatian it said "funding by the Rotary Club of San Rafael".

We left the field and went to a lunch given by the Rotary Club of Karlovac. Good food, good wines and nice people. They told us that the demining area we had funded was the site of Croatia's very *first* Boy

Scout Jamboree in August of 1964. Thanks to our demining project, a Boy Scout Jamboree is once again being scheduled to take place on this historic location.

A portion of the 8-minute CNN International program on Roots of Peace was filmed at our Rotary site near Karlovac. This program can be seen on CNN International Global Solutions program (Asia, Europe, Latin America) in November and December 2004.



*Dedication ceremony at new school. Plaque being given to the commune leader.*

## **A Once in a Lifetime Experience**

**By Sally Bader Mackle, Rotary Club of Seattle**

It was a six and a half hour drive over some of the worst roads in Cambodia, but for the ten Rotarians bumping and bouncing down those roads, it was a trip of a lifetime. We were on our way to see two villages along the Thai-Cambodian border that our District had paid to have demined.

The villages sit on top of the largest minefield in the world. Called K-5, it was laid after Pol Pot forces were pushed out of Cambodia and into Thailand. A hundred thousand Cambodians were conscripted for this work, which took well over a year to complete and covered 700 kilometers along the entire border with Thailand, from the Gulf of Thailand to Laos. As often happens, the best plans failed to keep the Khmer Rouge out, and on their return, they laid down additional minefields in this same area. Now, twenty-five years later, these mines are killing and maiming not combatants – but villagers, farm families who are being denied the use of their agricultural lands and therefore cannot even grow the food they need to live and who face daily the threat of a mine accident.

Sixteen clubs in District 5030, (the greater Seattle area) plus the Lampton Club in New South Wales, Australia, and the Central Rotary Club of Marin, California, joined forces to raise more than \$50,000 for our lifesaving project. This was enough to fund demining for two sections of land, with funds left over to build three wells for one village and a school in another. Our partner in this was HALO Trust, the largest demining organizations in the world, and one that is working extensively in Cambodia. We asked the in-country manager for HALO to find us some of the poorest areas in Cambodia because as Rotarians we wanted to be sure our funds would make a real difference in the lives of those we were helping.

We planned our trip to Cambodia for November 2004, to coincide with the finishing of the demining and the completion of the school construction.

The first week of our trip was spent in Vietnam looking at humanitarian projects our clubs had funded. We then flew to Siem Reap, Cambodia, where Tim Turner, Deputy Program Manager for HALO, had three Land Cruisers ready to take us to the border area. We spent the night in a small market town and after breakfast the next morning drove to the nearby minefields. HALO employs Cambodian nationals to do the work. With little economic development in this part of Cambodia, these jobs are sought after, and HALO pays six times the average Cambodian monthly wage, making it possible for one deminer to support an extended family.



*Deminer with white markers showing where landmines have been found.*

Deminers receive extensive training in all aspects of demining, with safety the first concern. Tim detailed the training they receive, and told us that the deminers work for no more than 30 minutes at a time, with a ten-minute break. At lunch they take one hour, which includes a short nap. Since the work is difficult but repetitive, they need to be sure the deminers are always alert and focused. Each section has a supervisor in charge, and all necessary first aid equipment is located on site, with sufficient personnel trained in first aid and with an ambulance ready to immediately take any civilian accident victim for help.

For serious injuries to HALO deminers, a helicopter is called in to evacuate them to emergency hospital facilities.

On site, the Cambodian supervisor, Mr. Ou Rom, gave us an excellent presentation, using a carefully detailed survey map to show areas already demined, with a red dot to note where mines were found. The green shaded areas showed work areas that had been prepared by mechanical vegetation cutters. HALO keeps meticulous records for each section of land it demines, placing white stakes in the ground to show where mines have been found and exploded. So careful are they in their work, they are able to guarantee 100 percent of mines have been cleared when they finish a section.

After the overview of their work, Tim gave us an in-depth safety presentation, asked each of us to sign a hold harmless agreement, and then helped us to put on the protective gear all must wear to enter a minefield. The body protection consists of a large Kevlar flack vest that covers the front of the torso and is secured using Velcro straps across the back. The visor is constructed of blast proof materials and covers the front of the head and is long enough to meet the top of the vest, leaving no portion of the torso unprotected.

Once secured into our gear, Tim gave the order to follow him single file out into the minefield, not to touch anything, and not to stray from the group. Along the way he pointed out the white stakes where mines had been found and exploded. About 100 meters from the deployment area, we stopped in front of a deminer at work. Ignoring us, he was carefully moving his metal detector over an area of ground that was about 1 meter wide and about a half a meter long. The detector went back and forth six times in this small area before the deminer was finished and ready to move on. He then rested the metal detector, and moved the red wood marker wand that showed the area where he had just finished working ahead a half a meter. Picking up the detector, he ran it back and forth over a metal tester to make sure it was working, and then started the process over again.

We then followed Tim to an area a short distance away, where red poles outlined a small area that had been dug away. Pointing into the hole, Tim showed us a mine that had been found earlier than morning. "We'll blow this up during the deminers' break," he said.

After both our groups of five had toured the minefield, it was break time and the supervisor brought in an explosive, laid it next to the live mine, and strung firing cable from it to the deployment area where we were all safely watching. After the supervisor did both a visual check and a loud auditory check to make sure the area around the mine was totally vacated, I had the honor

*(A Once in a lifetime Experience continued)*

of setting off the blast that blew up the mine. Another weapon of human suffering destroyed. This was what our trip was all about!

Having seen the actual minefields and witnessed their destructive capability, we were now ready to see the happier side of our work. It was time to visit our two "Rotary" villages.



*Deminer at work.*

Free of landmines, our new village was taking shape. Ta Saen was just off the main road, with several new houses visible, along with a new well, and with soybeans drying on the ground. Mr. Leng, HALO Cambodia's Operations Officer and most senior Khmer on the program, explained our visit to the villagers as we presented them with clothing we had brought for the children, and enough teddy bears for each of them. I don't know who had the better time, the children or the Rotarians. But it was definitely smiles all around!

One more stop, the village of Ou Chambok, a few miles more. Our demining work here had doubled the amount of land available for farming, giving the villagers increased economic opportunity.

As we approached the village, the new schoolhouse was very visible, both because it was new and the largest building in the village. The entry over the driveway had an arch and the villagers had lined the drive with large rocks on either side and cleared the area of vegetation, demonstrating the importance with which they held the school. Ahead of us was a large awning with all the village children sitting under it, neat and clean in their school uniforms of white shirts and dark trousers or skirts. The air was animated with their lively chatter, and the squawking loudspeaker the villagers had rented for the dedication ceremony only added to the noise and festivities.

The whole village had turned out: mothers with babies in arms, dads, grandparents, all the teachers, and the village and commune leaders. In a brief speech, I told the children that we had come from 15,000 kilometers away, across the Pacific Ocean from a country called

America -- just to see them, their new school, and the land they were now able to farm. Our goal was to make their lives safer and more secure by getting rid of the landmines that could harm them and their families. We asked them to work hard in their new school and to remember the Rotarians who had come in the spirit of friendship and good will. The village leaders generously thank us for what we had helped make possible. A plaque from our Rotary District for the school capped the end of the ceremony. Then it was time for all of us to hand out workbooks and school supplies for the children. Finally, for the first time, they were allowed into the new school. And in they ran, laughing and smiling as they slid into their new desks and sat grinning from ear to ear as we Rotarians took picture after picture.

It was now past 2 p.m. and we still had a 6 and a half hour trip back to Siem Reap, over roads that were very dangerous after dark. So much as we might have wanted to stay and savor the moment, we said our good byes, and headed out of the schoolyard and back over those unbelievable roads! This time, we had incredible and indelible memories to go with us. We arrived home in time for our American Thanksgiving. Of all that we had to be thankful for this Thanksgiving, one thing all of us on the trip share is that, through Rotary and our partner HALO Trust, we had the opportunity to bring lifesaving changes to the families of Ta Saen and Ou Chambok.

If your club or district would like more information on demining in Cambodia, HALO Trust, or if you would like to join District 5030 to continue our demining work in Cambodia, please contact Sally Mackle at [smackle@wcit.org](mailto:smackle@wcit.org). We are also planning another trip to Cambodia in 2005 to visit demining projects and welcome interested Rotarians to join us.

Copyright 2004 Permission to reprint to Rotarians group

## The Mineseeker Airborne Mine Detector

The [Mineseeker Foundation](#) is developing a system to revolutionize mine detection. By deploying the first operational airborne landmine survey system, the foundation aims to provide the mine action community with a quicker and more efficient survey tool. Additionally, the Mineseeker has the potential to be useful in a number of other areas necessary for development in mine-affected countries.

# NIGHT OF A THOUSAND DINNERS



*Rotarian Sandy Boucher and his wife Aliya host a Night of A Thousand Dinners event for landmine eradication.*

Rotary participation in Adopt-A-Minefield's Night of A Thousand Dinners (N1KD) continues to grow. In 2004 110 dinners have been held in 23 districts. Rotary Clubs host dinners in restaurants or halls or individual Rotarians host dinners in their homes. Instead of guests bringing wine

of dessert, they bring a donation. By registering on the website [www.1000dinners.com](http://www.1000dinners.com) Hosts receive a landmine awareness kit. Through Adopt-A-Minefield 100% of campaign donations are used to support mine action.

Over the past several years N1KD events have occurred in 18 Rotary Districts in Canada, the USA, the UK, Sweden, South Africa; Hong Kong, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Japan, and Australia. In addition, Rotaract and Interact Clubs have supported the N1KD outreach efforts of Rotary Clubs.

For the fourth year in a row District 7070 is the Rotary world's largest participant with 62 dinners currently registered. 28 Clubs, representing half of the 7070 District, participated in 2004. Again the 7070 project focus will be on Mozambique. 100% of funds raised in 2003 were used to clear a 30,000 square metre (7 acre) field in southern Mozambique. The local government

has now planned an agricultural development project for this area that would employ 1305 people from local communities. Once this area has been cleared, the government will make fertile land available to 757 families and will provide wood and building materials so that the people from this village can rebuild their homes.

Funds raised in other Rotary Districts in 2003, led by District 7080, were directed to an Adopt-A-Minefield clearance project in Cambodia. Malay District in Banteay Mean Chey Province was a strategic zone during the Cambodian conflict. The minefield that was cleared is close to the current Malay school which has 1,766 students. There will soon be an additional 900 students at this school and the cleared minefield will serve as the site for the school expansion.

Additional funds raised in a previous N1KD will go to the first ever Rotary Limb Camp in Afghanistan. The Rotary Club of Bombay, District 3140 and District 7070 in association with the newly established Rotary Club in Kabul will be creating a camp for up to 1,000 people who have lost their legs because of landmines.

As Chris Snyder of the Rotary Club of Toronto noted "The Night of A Thousand Dinners is a wonderful Rotary activity, which not only raised money to make the above happen but also provided an evening of fellowship for over 500 people and provided a glimpse of Rotary to non-Rotarians, which in turn brought in new members."

## 2004 Findings of the International Committee to Ban Landmines

To date, 144 countries have banned the use of all landmines. International Committee to Ban Landmines ([icbl.org](http://www.icbl.org)) – summary of 2004 Report: <http://www.icbl.org/lm/2004/findings>

**June 19, 2005, 8 - 11: 30 AM:** Mine Action Workshop at the Hyatt Regency at McCormick Place in downtown Chicago. A morning workshop for Rotarians interested in learning more about landmines and mine action projects their clubs can do to rid the world of these weapons of destruction. For information contact Sally Mackle, [smackle@wcit.org](mailto:smackle@wcit.org)

**November, 2005:** "Night of A Thousand Dinners." There will be more information available next issue.

Registration information available soon.

## Up-coming Events

**June 18 – 22, 2005:** See our booth in the Hall of Friendship at the Rotary Centennial Conference, Chicago.