



SAFE PASSAGE



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Film Festival Engages Community on Landmines, Social Issues

by Joe Merante, Humpty Dumpty Institute, and Skye Fitzgerald, SpinFilm

From June 7–10 the work of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs was highlighted in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, because of a unique partnership with the Humpty Dumpty Institute (HDI) and the Jackson Hole Film Institute (JHFI). HDI, a mine-action partner, was asked to create a global insight program focusing on pressing international social issues during the annual JHFI Film Festival as part of its 10-year partnership with JHFI.

HDI developed a series of events to tie together dialogues on important international issues through the power of film. The Humanitarian Demining Training Center from the U.S. Department of Defense created a mock minefield for the festival, allowing thousands to better understand the importance of mine action. Additionally, the Marshall Legacy Institute provided a mine-detection dog to conduct a series of demonstrations, engaging the audience and acquainting them with the importance of mine action.

The film *Bombhunters*, detailing the lives of Cambodians affected by mines and unexploded ordnance, was screened during the festival. Shot on location, *Bombhunters* explores the long-term consequences of war and genocide. Director/Producer Skye Fitzgerald started the project as a Fulbright research project, and eventually partnered with the Sundance Institute, the U.S. Institute of Peace and the U.S. State Department's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement to complete the film.



Photo by Chris G. Parkhurst

Phon Kaseka waits for his ride to arrive at a camp in Mondulkeiri province. Kaseka is one of the most skilled Khmer/English interpreters in Cambodia and was instrumental in translating during Khmer/English interviews during the filming of Bombhunters.

in November 2006. Screenings of the film throughout America have successfully raised money for the subject of the film, resulting in medical care, housing and improved living conditions.

James Lawrence, Director of Partnership Programs in PM/WRA, and the film's director, Skye Fitzgerald, discussed the film and mine action at the conclusion of each screening. More information on the film is available at www.bombhunters.com. Fitzgerald is currently in pre-production on a film about the scourge of cluster munitions.



Photo by Patricia Duncan

A HALO Trust worker prepares to destroy a batch of ERW cleared from local scrap yards in Poipet Cambodia.

Though only recently available for purchase, *Bombhunters* has already been credited with raising awareness of the continuing need to address the dangerous intersection of contamination from explosive remnants of war, poverty and the scrap-metal industry. In addition to screening at 10 international film festivals, *Bombhunters* was broadcast on Oregon Public Broadcasting in August 2006 and on the worldwide U.S. State Department internal cable and satellite system

At the Jackson Hole festival, HDI also presented two panels dealing with other global issues. The first was "The Importance of Educating Girls in the Developing World." This panel, moderated by President of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Patricia Harrison, focused on the need to increase educational opportunities for young women as a means of addressing myriad issues such as HIV/AIDS, hunger and regional conflict. The second panel addressed human trafficking and was moderated by CNN International anchor Jim Clancy. The audience was amazed to learn the extent to which this kind of human slavery and bondage exists in the world today.

Finally, HDI's Global Forum served as a vehicle for an important "cultural diplomacy" exercise. Working with State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, HDI and the JHFI facilitated an exhibition for six Iranian filmmakers in Jackson Hole. The filmmakers had the opportunity to discuss their craft with American filmmakers and to consider possible future collaborations.

Rotary Partnership for the Basra Prosthetics Project

by Linda Smythe, Montgomery Village Rotary Club

The social and economic challenges that confront handicapped people in war-torn countries such as Iraq sometimes seem insurmountable. The cost of prostheses is often greater than the yearly income of most families, and facilities for the disabled are insufficient to meet the demand in Iraq.

To assist with these problems the Rotary Basra, Iraq, Prosthetics Project will provide training for Iraqi Ministry of Health physicians and prosthetists and provide medical supplies and equipment for the Basra Prosthetic Centre to facilitate prosthetic manufacture and related treatment for civilian Iraqi amputees in this region. All of the Rotarians and medical personnel involved in this project are volunteering their time and skills to ensure the program's success. Many Washington-area Rotary Clubs are involved in this effort, as well as other clubs in the U.S. and overseas. The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) has granted this project \$200,000.

The Rotarians also are conducting a national limb drive, soliciting, collecting and storing donated prosthetic limbs at designated centers throughout the U.S.; Hangar Orthopedic Group, Inc., the largest U.S. prosthetic manufacturer, is supporting this effort.

With the assistance of the past Jordanian Ambassador to the U.S. His Excellency Karim Kawar and the past Commercial Representative Mr. Maher S. Matalka, the prosthetics center at the Al Hussein Society in Amman, Jordan will serve as a training center for this project. The PM/WRA grant will ensure that the latest equipment for the KHMC will be purchased and Jordanian prosthetists trained on this new equipment. They will, in turn, train Iraqi Ministry of Health (MOH) prosthetists.

For security reasons, Iraqi MOH personnel will travel to Jordan to receive initial training. Prosthetic equipment and related items will



Photo by Rotarian Albert Hess of the Pikesville-Owings Mill Rotary Club

Pictured here is 11-year-old Mohamed, whose site of amputation was so high he has no "stump" on which to fix the prosthesis. He was run over by an Iraqi military vehicle and left on the side of the road for dead.

be purchased for the Basra clinic and will support other MOH clinics which may also be in need.

As chairperson and founder of the Basra, Iraq, Prosthetics Project, and a member of the Montgomery Village Rotary Club, I have been involved for a few years with Rotary International's Friendship Initiatives with the Arab world, as well as maintaining personal friendships with royal families and diplomats in the region. With these strong relationships and desire to help where possible, the Basra, Iraq, Prosthetics Project seemed like a natural addition to our work. My two co-chairs, Ted Hamady and Marlene Thorn, both members of the Washington, D.C. Rotary Club, manage the

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Photo by John Stevens, Ofc. of Weapons Removal and Abatement/U.S. Dept. of State

Ability Trek Team Toyota member, Dan Sheret, with State Department employees, Rotary Club members, and Embassy of Jordan official.



Photo by Albert Hess of the Pikesville-Owings Mill Rotary Club

Jameela, who was amputated as a result of endocrinological disease, works with specialists on rehabilitation.

MAG Small Arms and Light Weapons Destruction in DRC

by Stephanie Gallagher, Mines Advisory Group–DRC Program Officer

The presence of unsecured small arms and light weapons (SA/LW) fuels and prolongs conflict around the globe. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a protracted series of armed conflicts that erupted between 1996 and 2003 resulted in the presence of large numbers of SA/LW in unsafe conditions, creating the following fears:

- Should there be a resurgence in violence, these stores could be looted and the weapons circulated internally or even sold illicitly to neighboring countries.
- Lack of security surrounding the storage sites could lead to illicit circulation and sale of weapons, instigating renewed violence.
- Unsafe storage of ammunition could lead to accidental death or injury through detonation.



Photo courtesy of MAG

FARDC personnel trained by MAG to operate the Kinshasa-based SA/LW destruction center pose with a 7.62 mm G3 rifle cut by hydraulic shears.

To address this situation, MAG America began taking the first steps toward a tangible reduction in SA/LW through a survey and destruction project in 2006 funded by the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA). In 2007, MAG secured written authorization from the Congolese Joint Forces Chief of Staff General Kisempia to destroy all surplus SA/LW in DRC. This authorization marks a significant step forward for DRC's stability and, throughout the DRC Great Lakes region, demonstrates that a weapon should not be seen as a valuable post-conflict commodity.

In mid-May, with support from PM/WRA and in cooperation with the Congolese Joint Forces (FARDC), MAG opened a SA/LW destruction center at the Central Logistics Base (CLB) in Kinshasa. The CLB serves as a clearinghouse for all FARDC assets including surplus weapons collected through Demobilization, Disarmament and Rehabilitation programs nationwide, making it an obvious location for SA/LW destruction. MAG has trained six FARDC personnel, who currently operate the center, in destruction management. Surplus weapons are separated, cleared of ammunition, registered and stored in a safe manner until they are cut by a set of hydraulic shears. Currently, the center destroys approximately 700 weapons per day; to date, more than 5,000 weapons have been destroyed.

Gen. Mukulay, commanding officer at the CLB, notes the destruction program “has led to a decrease in local arms trafficking and provides the FARDC with greater clarity on arms circulation nationwide.” By creating the DRC Weapons Destruction Database and recording the type, quantity, country of origin and serial number of each weapon, MAG has increased knowledge and the ability to trace illicit SA/LW. With this information, law enforcement agencies can better identify criminal use of weapons.

MAG's nationwide operations in DRC aim to destroy surplus weapons and ammunition in DRC before 2012 and certify the safe storage of remaining items. Local expertise will be fostered to ensure a national capacity for SA/LW destruction beyond 2012. As the only NGO SA/LW destruction operator in DRC, MAG is committed to promoting the security and safety of the local population by reducing the threat of continued or illicit use of weapons while also contributing to peace-building on a national level. MAG is currently the only NGO conducting SA/LW destruction in-country, but its efforts are reaping important benefits. With less of a threat from the illicit use of SA/LW, national peace building can continue.

Demining Along the Ho Chi Minh Trail

PeaceTrees Vietnam, one of PM/WRA's several grantees in Vietnam, engages in the full spectrum of humanitarian mine action (mine and unexploded ordnance clearance, UXO/mine-risk education and survivors assistance). It operates a successful EOD Response Team that clears persistent landmines and all types of explosive remnants of war—unexploded bombs, mortar shells and rocket-propelled grenades—throughout Quang Tri province. The team is funded in part by PM/WRA.



Photo by Quang Le, Peace Trees Vietnam

In the above photo, three members of PeaceTree Vietnam's EOD Response Team pause after carefully unearthing and preparing for removal an unexploded bomb, which will be safely detonated elsewhere. The bomb was discovered on a farm near the border with Laos in an area covered with paths that once made up the Ho Chi Minh Trail network used by the North Vietnamese during conflicts with the United States and, before that, France. This particular bomb was dropped by U.S. aircraft but failed to detonate, probably due to the heavy forestation slowing its fall.

Since 2000, the United States has spent well over \$37 million to help clear explosive remnants of war and landmines from Vietnam and teach people how to recognize and avoid explosive hazards. This assistance continues.

PM/WRA Staff Highlights

F. David Diaz is the U.S. Department of Defense liaison on the Interagency MANPADS Task Force, which coordinates U.S. efforts to reduce or eliminate terrorists' access to Man-portable Air Defense Systems. Previously, Diaz served as the program manager for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Small Arms and Light Weapons (SA/LW) Program, which works with foreign governments to improve the physical security and stockpile management of MANPADS, SA/LW and related ammunition and explosives, reducing the threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion. Diaz is a former U.S. Marine Corps officer with degrees in international relations and communications.

Tim Groen is the new leader of the Resource Management Team. He joined the office in June after spending six years in the Export Control and Related Border Security program (EXBS), a State Department program that strengthens the capability of countries to control strategic trade, including assisting in efforts to improve border security at major international ports. Groen has been a program manager with the EXBS program and more recently served as its coordinator for contracts, grants and acquisitions. A Michigan native and graduate of the University of Michigan, Groen has also been both a U.S. Marine and Navy civilian.

Dustin Cho is a student at Yale University, where he is majoring in political science and expects to earn his bachelor's and master's degrees next year. He received a Frank M. Patterson Fellowship to intern with PM/WRA this summer. His primary responsibilities involve SA/LW and MANPADS issues.

Sherri Francescon is pursuing her Masters in Public Administration at the University of North Carolina–Wilmington, and working in the operations section of PM/WRA this summer. As an undergraduate at Purdue University, she interned in the United Kingdom's House of Commons and in the White House Presidential Personnel Office. She also has worked for the Council for National Policy, and for The Heritage Foundation.

Kelly Becker is PM/WRA's summer clerical intern (and the sister of JMU Fellow Elise Becker). She attends St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, and will begin her junior year in the fall at the sister campus in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Prior to this summer, she had a brief internship at Senator John D. Rockefeller IV's office.

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Limb Drive initiative. Our group has also formed a new partnership with its hosts in Amman, the Amman Cosmopolitan Rotary Club. Additionally, Her Royal Highness Princess Majda Raad, President of the Al-Hussein Society for the Habilitation/Rehabilitation of the physically challenged, agreed to be the Honorary Patron of Rotary's Basra, Iraq, Prosthetics Project, and remarked that this "volunteer initiative...reflects dedication to a great humanitarian need but also brings together in friendship and compassion the people of Iraq, Jordan and the United States."

Participants in the Basra, Iraq, Prosthetics Project

Clubs of Rotary International (District 7620 and elsewhere)
Physicians for Peace
Hanger Orthopedic Group, Inc.
Suburban Hospital, Bethesda, Maryland
Mosaic Foundation
Embassy of Jordan, Washington, D.C.
King Hussein Medical Centre, Amman, Jordan
Amman Cosmopolitan Rotary Club, Amman, Jordan
Ministry of Health, Baghdad, Iraq
U.S. Department of State
International Monetary Fund
Al-Hussein Society for the Habilitation/Rehabilitation
of the Physically Challenged
Security International

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