



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Rotarians For Mine Action is a voluntary not-for-profit association dedicated to building awareness amongst Rotarians and Rotaractors, who are interested in getting involved in efforts to rid the world of landmines and assisting those who have been injured by them. **Won't you join us?**

The purposes of the RFMA is to encourage Rotarians and Rotaractors to: increase their awareness and knowledge of landmine related issues; become involved in projects that promote landmine risk education in countries afflicted with landmines and other unexploded ordinance; support the removal and decommissioning of landmines; provide survivor assistance to landmine victims and their families; and, support sustainable community development in landmine cleared communities.

The 2007 International Conference in Salt Lake City is right around the corner! While RFMA was not successful in securing a booth, District 7070 has a booth that will profile landmine clearance work in Mozambique undertaken through Night of A Thousand Dinners (see item on page 5). District 7070 will share their booth with RFMA so we will be handing out some promotional materials and encouraging others to join us. Please come by and have a look. If you can assist in staffing the booth send us a note at info@rfma.org.

Lastly, we have managed to fix the Paypal problems so please join or renew your memberships at your earliest convenience.

Best regards,

Sandy Boucher
President, RFMA

- 1 RFMA President's Message
- 2-4 District 7620 Basra, Iraq Prosthetics Project
5. District 7070 landmine clearance in Mozambique
6. Join RFMA; Chapter news; Register Projects.



Rotarians for Mine Action is a voluntary not-for-profit association dedicated to building fellowship and landmine awareness amongst Rotarians and Rotaractors.

Partnering and Collaboration At Its Best: Basra, Iraq Prosthetics Project
District 7620 Club Projects Reach Out for World Understanding
By Linda A. H. Smythe: Linda.A.Smythe@kp.org;

The Rotary Club of Montgomery Village has partnered with other Rotary clubs and organisations as well as with to bring aid to the amputees of war-torn Basra, Iraq.

The numbers of amputees in Iraq rise as innocent civilians fall victim to landmines, bombs, and insurgent attacks. Healthcare in the war-torn nation is barely accessible and of poor quality. Prosthetics are desperately needed to improve the prospects and quality of life for these.

In many parts of the world we watch children running free in neighbourhood playgrounds and parks with a sense of security that they are safe from harm. Across the world in war-torn Iraq, children share their playgrounds with some of the most sophisticated weaponry known to man. Decades of rusting old shells and mortars are left in fields, schools, and roads, tempting curious kids to use them as exploding toys.

Millions of landmines, planted during the 1980's by Saddam Hussein's regime, remain hidden near roads and across fields, causing death and destruction to innocent civilians every day. The victims are Iraqi men, women and children. Additionally, mobility for an amputee in Iraq is extremely problematic as wheelchairs cannot pass on rough roads and schools and buildings do not have handicap facilities.

More than fifty-thousand (50,000) civilian amputees exist in Iraq today, with an ever increasing rate occurring daily. Help for most is a distant dream. The Basra clinic has only four qualified technicians and six "bench workers" who produce on average 30 prostheses for the lower extremities per month. With a waiting list of 300, patients wait in excess of six months for artificial limbs.

The Rotary Basra, Iraq Prosthetics Project involves primarily the training of Iraqi Ministry of Health doctors and prosthetists, and equipping the Basra Prosthetics Center in a sustainable program. The initiative provides prosthetic limbs, medical care, education and support the civilian amputees of worn-torn Iraq.



In May 2006, this Rotary collaboration brought five American and six Iraqi prosthetics specialists for a week-long medical mission funding the trip for six of the most difficult lower extremity amputations cases in Basra to receive their first artificial limbs. Training was

conducted by Physicians For Peace. The Iraqi team that accompanied the individuals were able to update their practical and theoretical skills with the faster and more modern methods of making prostheses at the King Hussein Medical Center with the American prosthetics specialists. A training syllabus for the benchworkers was provided by John Schulte, Hanger.

The reward was working with the six patients, five of whom had bilateral amputations, used crutches or wheelchairs to manoeuvre with missing feet or legs. They were all selected because their cases were deemed as “difficult”. Four lost limbs from landmines. As John Schulte explained, surgical amputations usually leave a clean cut, but the force of an explosion makes for a more difficult prostheses placement.



Rotary volunteers, Sondra and Albert, participated in a 10 day medical mission in Amman at the King Hussein Medical Center (military hospital). Physicians for Peace Team of volunteers provided training to medical staff from Iraq and Jordan and also provided treatment to selected amputees.

The Basra Clinic, which serves not only the Basra District but also four other districts, is in continuous need of Medical Supplies. In April 2007, the Basra Committee shipped \$45,000 in prosthetic medical supplies to the clinic and these were safely received.

The Basra Prosthetics Project received a grant of \$200,000 from the US Department of State, Office of Weapons Abatement. Other grants include a grant from the Mosaic Foundation (run by the wives of the Arab Ambassadors to the US) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The Honorary Patroness for the Project is Her Royal Highness Princess Majda Raad of Jordan who is well known internationally for her humanitarian work, particularly concerning people with disabilities. In an open letter to Linda Smythe she writes:

"I am pleased to accept your invitation to become the Honourary Patron of Rotary's Basra, Iraq Prosthetics Project.

The partnering Rotary clubs in the United States and the host club, the Amman Cosmopolitan Rotary Club, have embarked on an important project to bring much need relief to civilian amputees in the Basra region.

I commend this all volunteer initiative which not only reflects dedication to a great humanitarian need but also brings together in friendship and compassion the people of Iraq, Jordan and the United States.

With all best wishes for continued success."

Next steps include training at the Al Hussein Society in Amman, Jordan for the Iraqi Ministry of Health personnel from Basra. Equipment is to be provided to the Al Hussein Society and comprehensive training programmes are being developed.

Also supporting the project is US amputee, Daniel Sheret, who will ride around the world in support of the Basra Prosthetics Project. His web address is: www.abilitytrek.org Daniel Sheret is raising awareness for the project and assisting with the Limb Drive, whereby used prosthetic devices are collected, broken down into useful components and shipped to Basra.

Rotary participants in the Basra Prosthetics Project:

<p>District #7620 Montgomery Village Rotary Club Rotary Club of Washington, D.C. Pikesville-Owings Mill Rotary Club Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary Club Waldorf Rotary Club Annapolis Rotary Club Kensington-Wheaton Rotary Club Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club College Park Rotary Club Rotary Club of Prince Frederick</p>	<p>Other Active Rotary Clubs Amman Cosmopolitan Rotary Club, Amman Jordan (Host Club) Rotary Club of Coronado, California</p> <p>Rotaract Clubs Amman Cosmopolitan Rotaract Club Rotaract Club of Prince Georges County (soon to be chartered)</p>
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Linda Smythe is currently with the Montgomery Village Rotary Club, where she has participated as the International Lane Director for five years. She lived on the friendly island nation of Bahrain for over 18 years. It was in Bahrain that she first became a Rotarian, joining the Rotary Club of Adliya. Linda served for eighteen years as Greece's Head of Mission in Bahrain in the capacity of Honorary Consul. She also managed the Bell Helicopter dealership for the Middle East from its offices Bahrain. She traveled extensively throughout the Arab world and her friendships and knowledge of the Arab peoples inspired her to promote friendship and understanding in the true Rotarian tradition in a post 9/11 world.

The impact of District 7070 on the landmine crisis in MOZAMBIQUE

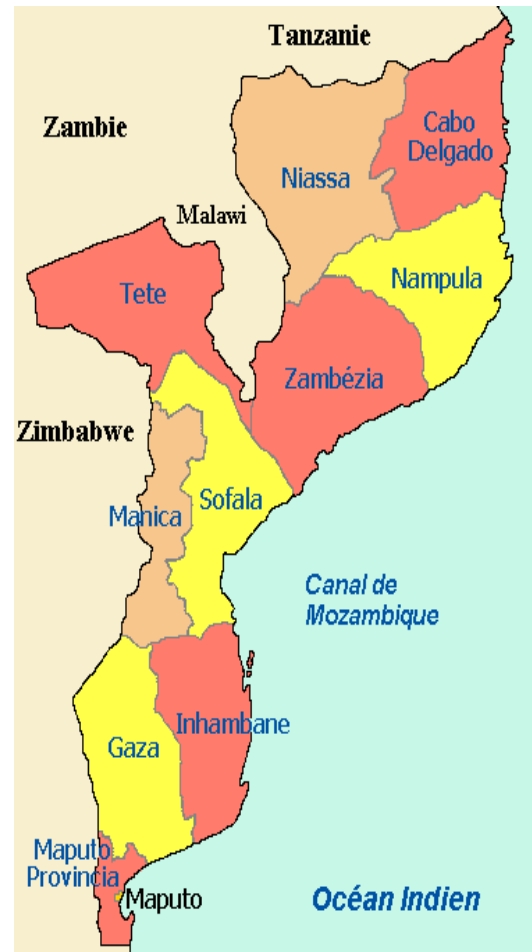
The Republic of Mozambique is affected by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). From 1964 to 1975, the struggle for independence led to the laying of mine belts by the Portuguese colonial rulers along the Tanzanian border and sporadic mining on roads and paths by insurgents from the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, Frelimo). From independence in 1975 until 1992, Frelimo, which became the ruling party after independence, was violently opposed by the Mozambique National Resistance (Resistência Nacional de Moçambique, Renamo), which was funded by Rhodesia and later South Africa. Frelimo used landmines extensively to protect economic infrastructure and Renamo used them to interdict roads and supply routes. Both Frelimo and Renamo also placed anti-vehicle mines on roads, bridges and river crossings to inhibit troop movements and damage the economy.

Mozambique signed the Mine Ban Treaty on 3 December 1997, ratified it on 25 August 1998 and became a State Party on 1 March 1999. Mozambique completed destruction of its stockpile of 37,818 antipersonnel mines on 28 February 2003, one month ahead of its treaty-mandated deadline.

Rotary District 7070 has:

- Contributed over \$350,000 for mine clearance in Mozambique
- Cleared almost 200,000 square metres of landmine infested land.
- Helped an estimated 30,000 people in Mozambique.

All of funds donated were used for project work by the Canadian Landmine Foundation/ Adopt-A-Minefield.



Encourage others to join RFMA

Just like in your Rotary Club – membership, membership, membership. Size matters when you are trying to influence. We believe that many Rotarians around the world are concerned about the landmine issue and believe, as we do, that it is solvable with a concerted effort. We need to be able to prove it. Our numbers need to grow in order to do so.



Form a District Chapter!

One of the key ways to build RFMA is through the creation of District Chapters. Right now there are registered Chapters in Districts 7070, 5030, 7080, 7090, 5130, 5150, 5240, 5320 and 1470. It is easy to form a Chapter – just get your District Governor’s approval to form a Chapter and then let us know at info@rfma.org. Need to know what to do next? Send us an email or send one to one of the Chapters through the Registered Chapters section of www.rfma.org and ask!

Welcome to the new RFMA Chapter in District 5300 - Chair: Lisa Hahn Smith. (RC Claremont Sunrise).

Welcome to new Co-Chairs in RFMA District 7080 Chapter Leslie Waychison (RC Burlington North) and Sheila Eastman (RC Mississauga City Centre). They replace Verna Andrews (RC Oakville-Trafalgar) who is stepping down before beginning her year as Club President. **Thanks Verna!**



Register your Projects:

A database was created by a team under the direction of now-RFMA President Sandy Boucher (RC Toronto) and with the support of the staff of James Madison University and funding from the U.S. Department of State.

The initial phase of this project involved the creation of an on-line, public, searchable database containing program descriptions for landmine related projects that Rotary Clubs have implemented. Initially this database will be populated with projects known to Rotarians For Mine Action. As the database matures, emphasis will be placed on encouraging Rotary Clubs to list their own projects. [Register your mine action project at www.rfma.org](http://www.rfma.org)



So in closing, please: Encourage others to join RFMA; Form a RFMA District Chapter; Register your mine action projects on rfma.org; Share this newsletter with others!