

## From the Rice field to the Minefield

23/02/2010

Today Ms Bouson (35yr old mother of 5) is the first deminer in Laos to intentionally find and uncover an M14 Anti-personnel Blast mine. Ms Bouson is a Phoenix Clearance Limited (PCL)<sup>1</sup> staff member, who's training and work clearing the second of the Minefields surrounding her village has been funded by the MIVAC Trust through the generosity of Australian people.



Figure 1. Ms Bouson and M14 Landmine



Figure 2: Deminers walking the safe lane into the Minefield

Ms Bouson like her 11 fellow deminers on this task all were recruited from the local community and intensively trained by PCL staff to perform the demining task. She says *“Three months ago we were working in the rice field now I am very proud to be working saving the lives of my children”*

This minefield called Khangpunghor 2 is one of 5 minefields that surrounded Ms Bousons village. All these minefields are remnants of the “secret war” in Laos that was part of what we know as the “Vietnam War”. The Landmines like the one Ms Bouson found today are made of plastic and contain minimum metal making them very difficult to find without incident.

Last year PCL cleared with MIVAC funding the first minefield in this village and once this one is complete the village will be two steps closer to a Landmine free existence.

MIVAC needs help to secure the future of these very poor people living with the threat of Landmines and cluster munitions a threat that was placed in their village before these brave deminers were born, yet still kill or main their relatives and livestock today.

<sup>1</sup> Phoenix Clearance Limited (PCL) [www.phoenixclearanceltd.com](http://www.phoenixclearanceltd.com)



Figure 3 MIVAC funded PCL Deminers heading home at the end of the day



Figure 4 MIVAC Funded PCL Deminer at work "note the red and white sticks the long grass outside the sticks is a live minefield. "She's working her way through it 1 cm at a time."