



MiVAC Trust—FUND RAISING DINNER 2 June 2006

The major fund raising event for 2006 is a fund raising charity dinner at NSW Parliament House, 2 June 2006.

The event committee has formed and planning is well underway.

The dinner is in partnership with Austcare and it is intended to donate an amount equal to the Cambodian Project in Otdar Meanchey Province to Austcare. In addition it is also intended to donate an additional sum for a small project in the Sudan, as an incentive for assisting us in this venture.

The balance of funds will be placed into a gifting account, for use on other projects, such as Batticaloa, Sri Lanka.

In addition groups are asked to arrange similar dinners with friends, workmates and corporations, to raise money for these worthwhile projects.

Should you intend to hold similar functions, please advise us so that we can ensure that donations are tax deductible and what project the donations are intended.

To assist members and people attending we are also putting

Dinner Committee:
Seated L to R Renuka Peiris, Tony Smyth, Elektra Spathopoulos, Christie Lim (Both Austcare Reps)
Standing l to R Jai Rowell, David Nichols, John Pritchard, Sue Paxton, Missing Peter Stainlay, Mike O'Hara



together travel packages (land only) via our Travel Partners, Travelscene American Express. Details of these packages should be available in the next issue of "The Yellow Butterfly".

So put your groups together and advise us at jpritch@iprimus.com.au or via phone at 02 9626 3376

MiVAC Tours 2006—Vietnam

The Tour program continues to be supported by Veterans and families alike. Discussions have taken place with NSW School Cadets and The Normanhurst group is commencing fund raising for their trip.

Another late breaking news is that we have been able to negotiate with Australia's largest Tour Wholesaler and as such we have access to a broader range of Travel Agencies including all 600 Travelscene American Express Offices as well as other agencies.

Tour Leaders are still needed to ensure a continuum of these tours. Remember that from each tour a donation is made to The MiVAC Trust. These donations will in turn be used to provide a better life for Land Mine Victims.

Remember these tours are not about Veterans returning to Vietnam but are designed to showcase land mines and the problems they present.

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Special points of interest:

- MiVAC Fund Raising Dinner 2 June 2006
- MiVAC Tours To Vietnam—Showcasing Land Mines in Vietnam
- Approximately 110,000,000 land mines still buried
- Volunteers Needed

Seen About Town

In December one of our partners, The MG Car Club NSW, held a gathering at Pasadena on Pittwater. Our National Patron, Colonel Alex 'Sandy' MacGregor, was guest speaker. Sandy imparted the aims and objects of the Trust to the Car Club Members and as usual the Pasadena provided an excellent sustenance. Nearly a \$1000 was raised at this function and this was added to the Cambodian Project. Donations were provided by The Owner of The Pasadena on Pittwater and the MG Car Club NSW. Both have been acknowledged separately, however to give wider recognition, we would like to publicly thank them for their support and generosity.



Sandy at Pasadena with President of The MG Car Club

Clearing a Minefield in Vietnam

The Australian Army cleared all Australian laid or supervised minefields prior to departing Vietnam in 1971.

Prior to its departure from Vietnam in Oct/Nov 1971, the Australian Task Force cleared all of the Australian laid or supervised minefields, in Phuoc Tuy Province. The first major minefield to be cleared was the infamous "Barrier Minefield", which was anchored in the North by the "Horseshoe" and in the South by the coastal dunes.

During the clearance of this minefield unique methods were used. These involved the use of specially fitted M113A1's. Once these vehicles had done their job, the armoured bulldozers moved in and literally buried the minefield into deep slots carved out of the earth. These slots were then covered, the site fenced and 'Mine Signs' erected.



Today much of this area is cultivated and productive.

Other minefields were cleared using the armoured bulldozer, which first cleared the fence, cut a slot and then buried the minefield. A record of mines detonated were kept. Once the dozer had done its work the Sapper team moved into the minefield in the APC and visually spotted mines. These were then neutralised by hand and detonated later. Once the field had been cleared a fence was erected and mine signs hung. Minefields cleared in this manner in 1971 were:

- Van Kiep
- Song Rai
- Binh Ba
- Xuyen Moc
- Hoi My
- Lo Gom

In addition to this method and equipment, 1st Field Squadron had on loan an M48 US Tank with mine rollers. This was used on route clearance. The rollers were designed to activate mines. It was involved in a command detonated mine incident on route 328 in 1971 and disabled.



The photo below shows '92T' with its mine rollers intact and parked in the plant yard at 1st Field Squadron.

However despite all of this the only way to confirm a minefield safe is to prod for the mines. Today deminers face a challenge in that mines are not laid in accordance with any plan. They are designed to inflict casualties and hence they are laid where best to do so. Unfortunately it is the innocent who suffer.

Volunteering

In 2005 The Editor wrote an article on "Volunteering" and what it meant to become a volunteer.

This paper was delivered to the National Mental Health Forum, chaired by Maj Gen Bill Crews, AO, National President Returned and Services League . It was also delivered to a number of Veterans organisations, including the VVCS.

The Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia (VVFA) kindly ran an article on this paper in their December 2005 newsletter. Below is an extract of this article;

Volunteering

Many TPI veterans have found that doing limited volunteer work improves their health and

well being by giving them a reason to get out of bed every morning. Mainly volunteers run our Vietnam Veteran Federation offices. The help they have given and continue to give other disabled veterans would be hard to overestimate.

But whilst helping others they have helped themselves and the improvement in their well being would also be hard to overestimate.

Vietnam veteran John Pritchard was a volunteer helping other sick

veterans submit claims for disability pensions. He did a very good job too. But after three years he moved on to a different kind of volunteer work. John had been an army engineer who, in Vietnam, had experience with mines. This attracted him to join an organization called The MiVAC Trust.

John talks about the Trust:

"Today the MIV AC Trust has over 200 members both individual and corporate, with Chapters in Tasmania and NSW. A new Chapter is soon to be opened in W A,

Volunteering Continued

with a similar arrangement being negotiated in Queensland.

"As a MIVAC Trust Volunteer, you can do almost anything. In NSW we wished to create a volunteer base of creative personnel. We had ideas that we would set up a Tour Group, run a speaker circuit, move into schools as a part of a

to have volunteered and will dissertate on their land mine experiences in the once infamous Barrier Minefield. Tour participants will also receive a similar dissertation from an Army Engineer on the role played by RAE in land mine clearance.

"Other volunteers both military and non-military are working with the NSW Dept of Education & training on the development of a Schools program, to Adopt a

structured Schools program. I am pleased to say that in 4 months since the NSW Chapter commenced; we have succeeded on all fronts.

"Our tour program commences in July 2006, and three additional

Minefield. We are hoping from this that schools will recognize that they are indeed fortunate and commence to raise funds for land mine survivors. Schools in Victoria have also expressed an interest in similar talks to see if it fits their volunteer criteria.

"In 2006 the tours will continue, however volunteer tour leaders are required. The criteria for a Tour Leader is set by The Trust and should a person volunteer, he/she

tours to Vietnam are planned. One will coincide with the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan. But what makes our tours different is that we have also co-opted former Viet Cong members of D445 Battalion and asked them to assist us. They

raises 20 Pax and their tour is paid for.

"Another initiative is to hold an International Conference in Syd From Page 3 ney, with the guests (we hope) being Paul And Heather-Mills McCartney. Both are International Land Mine Ambassadors."

*Volunteering can
overcome an intellectual
vacuum*



**THE MIVAC TRUST (MINES
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Mines Victims & Clearance

**Were are on the Web
www.mivactrust.org**

MiVAC NSW would like to thank their partners for their continued support:



Austcare
Australians Caring For Refugees



Australian Vietnam Veterans Reconstruction Group.
Working on the development of Vietnam



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The NSW MG Car Club