



THE
NATIONAL NEWSLETTER
OF THE MiVAC TRUST
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MiVAC Thanks Gary Bridgland

Down in the southern country climes of Castlemaine in Victoria, Gary Bridgland organised a Blues and Jazz night at the Delmenico's Guildford Family Hotel last January. The night proved a great success with around ten bands providing the entertainment and even children enjoying a bouncing castle and clown. From this night Gary raised over a thousand dollars.

During his promotion of the event he was given a donation of \$10000 specifically for minefield clearance.

This sum enabled us to complete the clearance of Khangpunghor 2 minefield. Record rains last year washed some unexploded ordnance beyond what was previously the safe perimeter. Finishing that clearance means the locals can now safely take ownership of the land. Thank you Gary for your efforts and thank you for the generosity of a local donor who wishes to remain anonymous.



The next time you see this facilities building it will be occupied by Steve and Dorene and a few volunteers. This building is part of the Ban Xai project - it basically is the Head Quarters of the project. Besides MiVAC's office being within there will be a kitchen, a medical clinic, an

area for training purposes and accommodation for volunteers. When we finish the project it will belong to the villagers. The building now has a door in this end which leads into the area set aside for eating - and the kitchen.

You scratch mine. Or Two birds with one Stone

Ex sapper Henry "Dayo" Tailor and his wife Carmel are two of the many unheralded givers of this Lucky Country of ours. For more than twenty years Dayo and Carmel have been sponsoring needy children in countries around the world and at present have a boy in Burma and a girl in Laos Huck Alouy by name.

The Tailors greatest wish is to is to travel to these countries and see how the kids are progressing , see them smile, watch them at play and meet their parents and siblings.

They don't kid themselves though. Dayo is no longer a young digger who can fly all around the world at his leisure so, the Tailors found a compromise. They had heard that their old friends Steve and Dorene Carroll were going to Laos this year with MiVAC. It followed naturally that Dayo would ask his old mate to look in on Huck in Mahaxai in central Lao. As the Carrolls were going to Kohai to put walls on the primary school and would pass close to Mahaxai they gladly agreed.

The Tailors were thrilled and Dayo responded that he would donate the \$1000 for the school walls as reward provided that they took photos of Huck and her family.

This act of generosity has meant that Steve and Dorene can now use their \$1000 that they were donating for the walls to furnish the new building at Ban Xai with creature comforts like a fridge and double bed.

Not a bad arrangement when you think about it. Lots of people made happy and everyone gains. Its people like Dayo and Carmel who make the world a better place to live-in. Steve Carroll.



This picture epitomises the issues that we will address in Hinmou Peung - which is an all Hmong area in part of Ban Xai

Visit to the Schools in Kohai

My husband and I were very privileged to be able to accompany Steve Carroll and

his wife Dorene on a visit to both the secondary and primary schools in Kohai on 8th November 2011. We were greeted with much warmth and appreciation. This was demonstrated in the official ceremony they conducted to present Steve with citations of gratitude for the work done at this project in November 2010. Steve was able to deliver the keyboard which they had requested. Immediately it was plugged in and we were entertained by a song by the headmaster and sports teacher from the secondary school. It was requested that Steve respond with a song himself. He gave a wonderful rendition of Waltzing Matilda with Dorene and myself joining in for the chorus.

I was able to deliver a large box of textbooks to the school. These had been requested and through a friend in Vientiane, we were able to get them printed. Now they have one text in each subject for each year from year 6 to the seniors and can be confident that they are teaching the correct work to the students. The total for all these textbooks was only A\$80 - the cost of one text book back here! We also distributed some sporting equipment (soccer and volley balls and skipping ropes), stationary items (pens, pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners and posters) and some books for their library to assist with the teaching of English.

After the official welcome and thank you was concluded, we inspected the work that had been done last November. This included the toilets, well, water tank and dormitory. What a pleasure it was to see all these facilities were being used by students who previously were denied such basics which we take for granted. The students were most happy to show us around and have their photos taken with us.

Our next visit was to the primary school where we met teachers and students. Much fun was had with a couple of skipping ropes- laughter and smiles all round. The buildings at the primary school are in need of walls to keep the wind and rain out. When the weather deteriorates, the students need to go home as it becomes impossible for lessons to continue under such conditions. It is Steve and Dorene's wish to return here next year with the funding to have these walls constructed.

This visit left a lasting impression on my husband and I. What a difference can be made to communities who have so very little and ask for modest improvements to their schools.

We commend MiVAC for their wonderful efforts in Lao, some of which we saw firsthand.

Sue Walsh.



The pictures above are of another village that is looking for serious assistance. The situation in Ban Xai is only a fraction of the conditions in this village - More work for you Ben to see where we may go after we have improved the conditions at Ban Ban Xai.

Getting The Word Out

On 15th March Steve Carroll gave a presentation to the school assembly at The Hunter Christian School Mayfield on the work being carried out in Lao. He was supported by his neighbour Dave Turner and his son Shaun who is a student at the school. They are both going to Lao in a few weeks to help out on the Ban Xai project. NBN the local Newcastle TV station were there to do a segment for the

local news.

As usual Steve's presentation was excellent and the assembly was very attentive evidenced by the barrage of questions he had to answer. I'm sure that Shaun will cop plenty of questions from his fellow students on his return.

It was a well spent couple of hours with the Teachers and Students and as usual Steve was able to get the word out about MiVAC and the couple of minute segment on NBN news will hopefully get some response from the public. Jim.



The pictures above tell two stories. Sandy got this gorgeous photo of five Hmong girls in one family and on the right is Meng and his wife and child. Meng is the teacher at Hinmou Peung and his wife (also a teacher - they met at Teacher's College - is to be the other teacher at Hinmou Peung - when the other class room is built. Meng is very proud because this is his new home which he is building.

MiVAC Volunteers

In December 2011 it was decided to set up a volunteer program within MiVAC, with the express purpose of allowing volunteers access to our project sites.

In February 2012, this came into being, with the appointment of a Volunteer Co-coordinator, whose task is to work with the MiVAC Project staff and plan both trade and general hand volunteers, into the Project Time-line.

In the first 30 days, a total of 6 volunteers were processed and have been briefed on their role at Ban Xai, Lao PDR. The first depart on 27 March, with the remainder staggered from 4 April through to May 2012.

The second round of volunteers is due to fly in, May/June 2012, with others being inducted to meet August & September time-lines.

From time to time we will have a need for specific trades and these will be programmed in, based on the Site Supervisor, projections.

Should anyone feel that they have the skills to aid the poorest and impoverished peoples of Lao PDR, then feel free to contact The Volunteer Co-coordinator, John Pritchard who can advise you on dates and any specific trades/skills needed. Remember it takes a little time to process each volunteer, as MiVAC is required to meet all International Protocols for the safety of children, terrorism and occupational health and safety.

Email: mivacnsw@gmail.com

Phone 0411 107 445

Fishing Club Donation

The Junction Inn Fishing Club at Raymond Terrace (Newcastle) have been running a fishing tournament for about seven years with proceeds going to charities. The Westpac Rescue Service has been our main recipient over the years but we have also donated to Leukemia Research and Motor Neurone Research.

This year MiVAC has been given a \$300 donation towards any project the Trustees agree upon. As a member of JIFC, I'm sure I can get further donations from our annual event. Jim.



"The MiVAC Trust"

Not all members understand what the Mines Victims And Clearance Trust ("MiVAC") is other than it does good deeds. But then so do Boy Scouts. The following lines hopefully give you some insight into the structure and workings of MiVAC .

This sort of thing is usually heavy reading so I will try to make it as light as I can.

Basically a trust is a legal structure and in the case of MiVAC it is governed by the law of Tasmania where the Trust was established. Law on trusts is very old with the Trustee Act in Tasmania coming down in 1898 although it was amended in 2008.

A trust is set up to to entrust property in one person or several people for the benefit of another. A common example is where a person is not capable of handling money or assets so those assets are given to trustee(s) to apply the income from those assets to the benefit of the incapable person. In MiVAC's case the the purposes are defined as follows:

1. To provide assistance to individuals and communities affected by mine warfare,
2. To help orphans and those rendered destitute by mine warfare,
3. To provide counseling and education to those affected by mine warfare,
4. To provide medical assistance to survivors,
5. To fund mine clearance teams or provide equipment for such teams, and
6. To do other things to help those affected by mine warfare at the Trustees' discretion.

A beneficiary of the Trust is a person(s) who falls within any of the categories above.

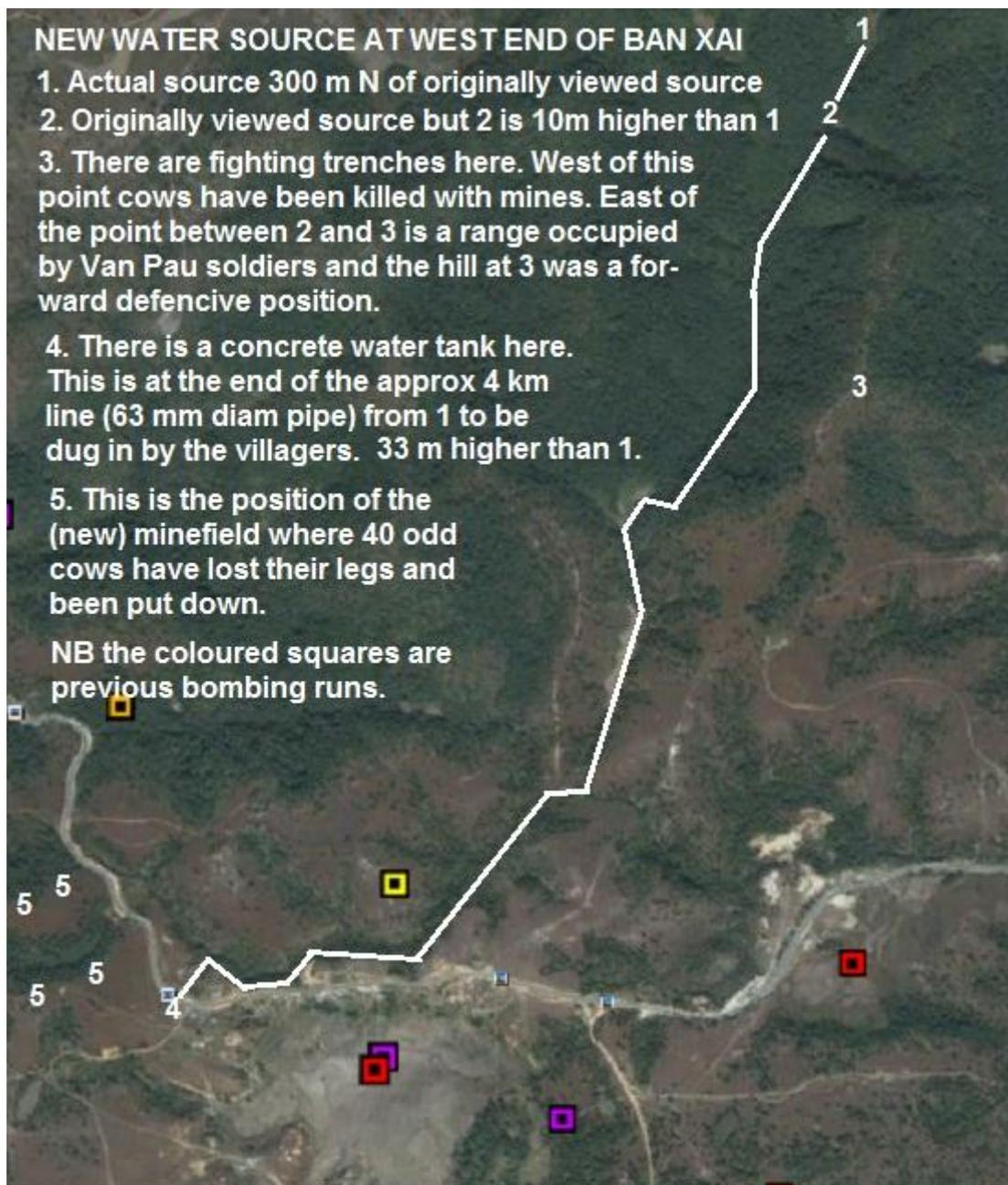
In turn, the Trustees have a responsibility and liability to comply with the law.

Points 1-6 above are a paraphrasing of the full definitions set out in the Trust Deed. If any member wants a copy of the Trust Deed please ask any Trustee who will provide you with a copy. The current trustees are Steve Carroll trustee.scarroll@mivactrust.org , Paul Jeffress trustee.pjeffress@mivactrust.org , Gillian Paxton secretary.gpaxton@mivactrust.org , Rob Woolley trustee.rwoolley@mivactrust.org

Is anyone still awake?"

Kindly

Paul Jeffress



The seventeen year old girl (below) is carrying water to her home. She is very shy and Sandy asked Yang, MiVAC's manager in Lao, "is she married"?. His answer is interesting in that he pointed to women who were married and were not really allowed out of their home - "they must wait for their husband". He continued - "This girl (carrying the water) is smiling - you don't see any of the wives who stay at home smiling".



NEWSFLASH

The dangers of working in a country littered with unexploded ordnance does not just come from landmines and booby traps. Dorene Carroll, our volunteer currently working in Ban Xai was recently attacked when walking with her husband back to their hotel in Phonsavan. Her assailant, a local identity with mental problems, punched her in the head and then attempted to kick her while she was on the ground but Steve intervened with a walking stick.

Lao PDR (formerly known as Laos), because of its poverty, does not have the resources or facilities to house mental patients.

David Murray - and his Magnificent Feat supporting MiVAC



Sixty six year old Vietnam Veteran Dave Murray is in the final phase of training for his push bike ride around Australia. With less than six weeks before he sets off from Narrabeen on 6th May, David is not only riding the streets of Sydney in the early hours

of the morning, but he, along with Paul Jeffress and Rotarians Peter Agar and Mick Harriden, have been devoting an incredible amount of time to the organization that goes hand in hand with an undertaking that will see David cover between fifteen and sixteen thousand kilometers, during his five months on the road.

It is hoped the ride will not only be a successful fund raiser but will help raise the profile of the MiVAC Trust and the excellent work it is doing, clearing landmines and unexploded bombs in South East Asia. Particularly in Laos where it is presently undertaking a huge project in the little hamlet of Ban Xai to the north of that country.

Founded by Vietnam Veterans the Trust has completed several projects to date but the task in Lao is enormous. With 30% of the 2 million tons of bombs dropped on that country during the Vietnam War failing to have "gone off," the poor and their children face incredible danger on a daily basis as they use the metal detectors supplied to them by the local foundries to search for scrap metal. In Ban Xai we are also helping out the villagers in a number of other ways such as providing resources for the local school and helping solve water and sanitation issues.

Anyone able to organize fund raising functions/activities along with those who may be able to provide David with a comfortable bed for a night during his ride, is asked to contact Peter Agar Ph. 02 47396436 email: pagar@tpg.com.au or Dave Murray email: djyarrum@yahoo.com.au Ph. 028205735.

On a closing note two points:

1. I know that we all wish Dorene and Steve Good luck and a thousand thank yous for taking on the daunting and challenging task of the MiVAC Project at Ban Xai.

2. We have much more news for you. Particularly about some work we have done in Vietnam and the clearing of the #2 Minefield at Ban Xai. Next time look out for this and more. Support us at www.mivactrust.org 95% of our funds go to the project and we are all volunteers.

Good luck to all our supporters, with a special thanks to our donors and to our commercial advertisers.

The Editor

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