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Public, Private, and Civil Sector Partnerships Bolster Humanitarian Demining Efforts

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Field Notes

Public, Private, and Civil Sector Partnerships Bolster Humanitarian Demining Efforts

by Bob Ebberson and Wendy Hart [Schonstedt Instrument Company]



UNMAS assesses explosive threats at a future MINUSMA campsite in Gao, Mali, February 2014.
Photo courtesy of UNMAS.

Schonstedt Instrument Company is a small manufacturing company located in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia, about 70 miles (112 km) from Washington, D.C. Schonstedt makes instruments that locate underground objects. These include pipe, cable, and magnetic locators that find and trace underground utilities and ferrous metals such as boundary markers used by surveyors. Magnetic locators have proven to be successful in locating unexploded ordnance (UXO) and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). In looking for ways to grow this market,

Schonstedt recognized an opportunity to support humanitarian demining throughout the world. Determining that the sale of a pipe and cable locator would financially support the donation of a magnetic locator, Schonstedt implemented a program in 2007 that would be sustainable over time and created the Schonstedt Humanitarian Demining Initiative.

Needing partners who could identify and prioritize populations for which clearance would otherwise be impossible without a donation, Schonstedt partnered with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). To date, UNMAS



UNMAS assesses explosive threats at a Malian army camp in Timbuktu, December 2013.
Photo courtesy of UNMAS.



An operator with The Development Initiative uses a magnetic locator to conduct battle area clearance activity at the Malian army camp in Timbuktu, December 2013.
Photo courtesy of UNMAS.

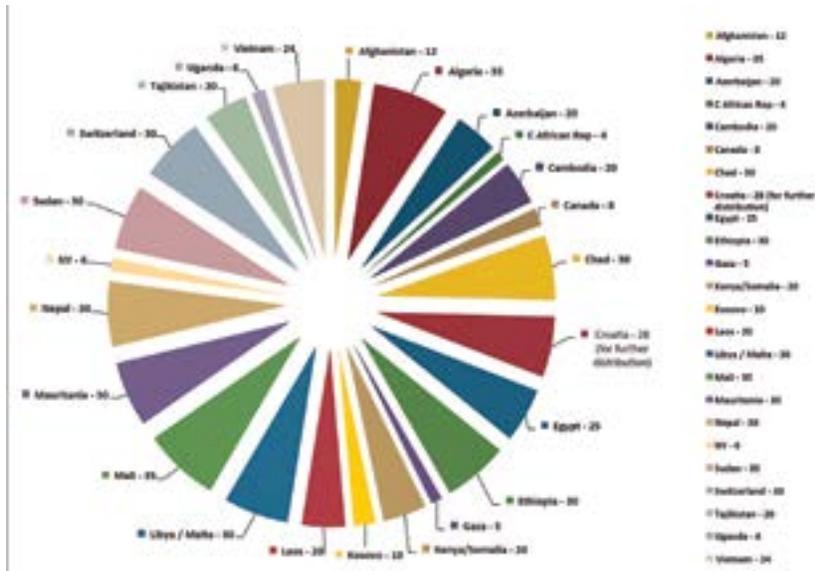


Figure 1. Between 2007 and 2016, the Schonstedt Humanitarian Demining Initiative deployed more than 500 donated locators to more than 20 countries in need. Figure courtesy of Schonstedt Instrument Company.

has facilitated the donation of 508 tools (priced at US\$1,041 each) to U.N.-supported deminers in 26 countries, including but not limited to Algeria, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Chad, Croatia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gaza, Kenya, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Nepal, Somalia, Tajikistan, Vietnam, and the Darfur region of Sudan. The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA) has also assisted in identifying areas most in need of support. Together with UNMAS in New York, Schonstedt Instrument Company equipped U.N.-supported humanitarian demining teams in locations that would not otherwise have benefited from mine clearance. This expanded capacity meant fewer losses of lives and limbs, and contributed to the vision of a mine-free world.

The Mechanics

The program evolved over time. Initially, one magnetic locator was set aside for every sale of a pipe and cable locator. A Schonstedt partner might put in a request for 20 units to be sent to Cambodia and provide a point of contact there. To evidence a true need and encourage a shared stake in the process, Schonstedt required that recipients bear the cost of shipping. On receipt of those funds, the donated equipment would ship.

As the program became more prominent, individuals began approaching Schonstedt, wishing to contribute to the effort. They asked if they could buy a magnetic locator and donate it. In response, Schonstedt modified the program so that whenever someone donated a magnetic locator, it would result

in a one-to-one match by Schonstedt, thereby allowing two locators to be donated in that person’s name. The donor base has grown to include associations, businesses, church groups, service clubs, and individuals, all of whom appreciate the fact that 100 percent of their contributions go to shipping equipment directly to trained humanitarian deminers in the field, with Schonstedt absorbing all administrative costs. Individual donors from the Religious Society of Friends donated three of the 10 units sent to Tajikistan and provided funding for 24 units to Vietnam. Donors are recognized with letters of appreciation from Schonstedt, UNMAS, PM/WRA, and the in-country recipient of the equipment whenever possible, e.g., the Croatian

Mine Action Centre or the International Mine Action Training Centre in Nairobi, Kenya.

Schonstedt locators have contributed to clearance operations in numerous countries. For instance, the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre reported finding complete cluster bombs, each containing hundreds of submunitions. Most were broken open and their contents relocated down the mountain. In one gully, ten submunitions were found by eye, while another seventeen were found using the donated detectors. And as reported by the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) and The HALO Trust, over 80 tons of ammunition



The Croatian Mine Action Center (CROMAC) employed the Schonstedt GA-72Cd locators on clearance projects along the power line in eastern Croatia near the Osijek city in very difficult terrain. Photo courtesy of CROMAC.



Daniel Craig, U.N. Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards, demonstrates the use of the Schonstedt magnetic locator.

Photo courtesy of the U.N Photo/Manuel Elias.

are destroyed in Afghanistan each month. Schonstedt locators play a part in the location and destruction of these explosive items.

Many of those who donate to Schonstedt are recurring donors and welcome the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people they will never meet. In addition, employees of Schonstedt have the satisfaction of knowing that what they do on a daily basis has a far reaching effect and contributes to the well-being of others in some of the world's most mine-contaminated countries. ©



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