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In Remembrance: Michael Creighton

Michael Creighton of Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) was killed in an airplane crash in Laos along with his father, Gordon Bruce Creighton, and 47 others on 16 October 2013.¹

The Lao Airlines flight was reportedly traveling from the Lao capital of Vientiane to Pakse in southern Laos when it crashed in the Mekong River while attempting to land. A statement from Lao Airlines indicated that the accident was due to "extreme[ly] bad weather conditions" from tropical storm Nari. According to an airline-ratings service, the aircraft, while brand new, had not undergone a safety audit.¹

Creighton, 41, had worked as the operations manager for NPA's Survey and Clearance Programme in Laos since February 2012.² Creighton's father was reportedly visiting to view his son's work in Laos.¹



Photo courtesy of Michael Creighton's Facebook page.

"Mike [was] a real catch for us as [he] was an established authority in mine action and well versed in all things relating to land release," says Atle Karlsen, country director, NPA Lao PDR. "In the 18 months since, Mike has been a key part of NPA's program, testing and implementing the groundbreaking Cluster Munition Remnant Survey, changing the UXO sector in Laos in the process. Mike was a creative and constructive operations manager, always looking for ways to improve our work and increase outputs. He was always pleased to engage with other stakeholders to capacity build and argue for improvements and increased quality. The last 18 months in the NPA Laos Operations Room [were] creative and constructive beyond anything I have experienced in mine action, much thanks to Mike."³

From Glen Innes, New South Wales, Australia, Creighton served as an officer in the Royal Australian Engineers for 11 years before establishing himself as a project-operations and planning manager in the explosive ordnance disposal and mine action fields in 2001. He worked in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Iraq, Laos and Lebanon in a variety of commercial and U.N. Mine Action Service positions. From 2008 until 2011 Creighton worked with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), where he was the land release program manager.^{4,5,6}

According to Ian Mansfield, a mine action consultant and GICHD's former deputy director, "Michael was a highly capable, well known and well-regarded member of the mine action sector. He had a high level of technical skills and solid hands-on practical experience in the field. He was able to effectively apply these skills and knowledge ... at the GICHD to produce high-quality work, and his presence at the Centre contributed to maintaining its high standards and reputation. Michael will be sadly missed by all who knew him."⁵

Among other articles in *The Journal*, Creighton most recently coauthored (with Atle Karlsen and Mohammed Qasim) the article, "Cluster Munition Remnant Survey in Laos," published in Issue 17.2 (Summer 2013). In addition, according to Mansfield, while at GICHD, Creighton "was a part of the team that drafted the new land release series for the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and [he] coauthored IMAS documents."⁶

Creighton is survived by his fiancée, mother and two siblings.^{1,7} Messages of sympathy and condolences can be sent to creighton.condolences@gmail.com. ©

See endnotes page 67