

Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction

Volume 15
Issue 2 *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action*

Article 32

July 2011

Laos: Legacy of a Secret

Book Review

Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at JMU (CISR)

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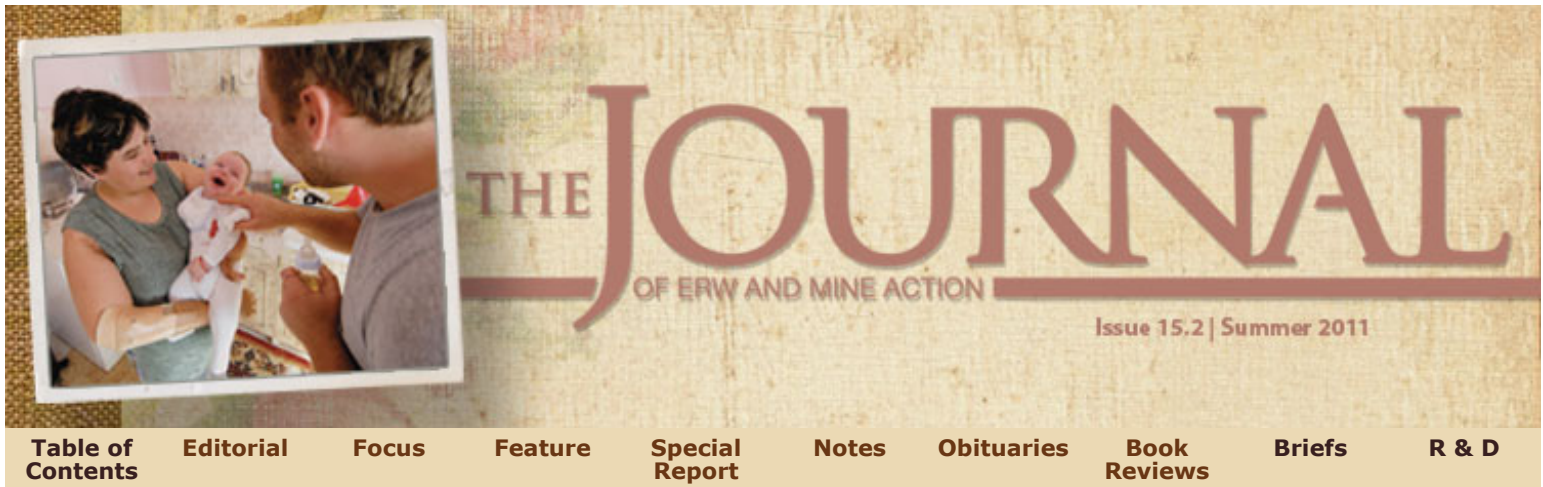
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Recommended Citation

Review, Book (2011) "Laos: Legacy of a Secret," *The Journal of ERW and Mine Action* : Vol. 15 : Iss. 2 , Article 32.

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Laos: Legacy of a Secret

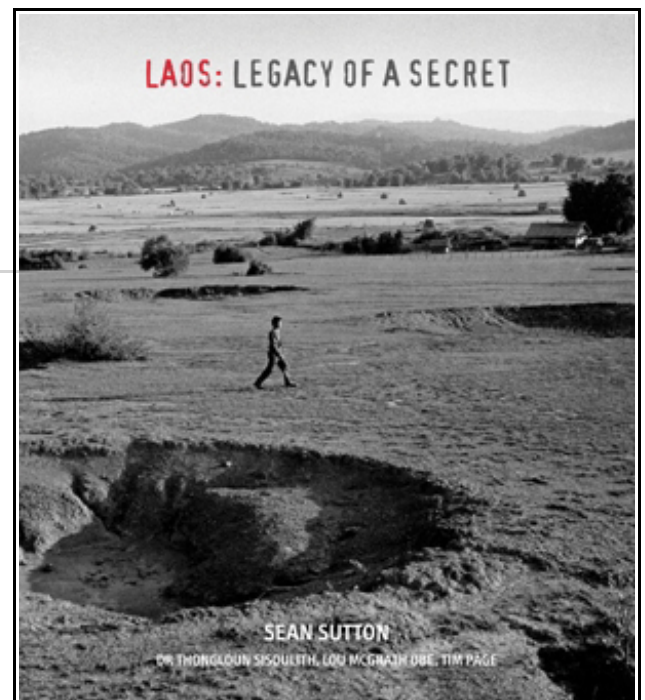
by Sean Sutton, Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith,
Lou McGrath OBE and Tim Page
Dewi Lewis Publishing, 1 March 2011
ISBN: 9781907893018
<http://amzn.to/gsEE2K>
US\$40.00

During the Indochina War from 1964 to 1973, the United States dropped more than 270 million cluster munitions on Lao PDR. Up to 30 percent failed to detonate on impact, leaving the largely agriculturally supported country littered with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of unexploded cluster munitions (or "bombies" as they are called in Laos) that three decades later continue to maim and kill Lao villagers.

As a photographer with MAG (Mines Advisory Group), Sean Sutton has traveled the globe, documenting the humanitarian impact of unexploded ordnance, landmines and other remnants of war. In *Laos: Legacy of a Secret*, Dr. Thongloun, Lou McGrath OBE and Tim Page tell the story of a country struggling to rid itself of mines, while Sutton provides a visual documentation of the legacy of the bombings in Lao PDR, capturing the locals as they go about their daily lives in a land invested with cluster munitions and unexploded ordnance. From villagers fashioning tools, fences and daily utensils out of cluster-bomb units to scrap-metal collectors dismantling bombs for income to MAG's mine-risk-education efforts to teach children and villagers how to identify UXO, Sutton provides a stunning visual story of a country's resilience in a perilous land. Photographer Tim Page describes Sutton as a "battlefield archaeologist," and notes his photos are haunting and revealing of the Lao people's struggle for normalcy in a country riddled with UXO. ↕

~ reviewed by Jennifer Risser, CISR Staff

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