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The U.S. Department of Defense and the Role of the Journal of Humanitarian Demining

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The Journal of Humanitarian Demining

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Inaugural Address

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The U.S. Department of Defense and the Role of the Journal of Humanitarian Demining

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The Department of Defense (DoD) Humanitarian Demining program would like to thank the staff at James Madison University's Humanitarian Demining Information Center (HDIC) for creating the inaugural issue of *The Journal of Humanitarian Demining*.

This short introduction to what the Department of Defense contributes to this vast international problem covers three main areas:

1. assisting host nations to establish long-term, sustainable, humanitarian demining programs,
2. enhancing the synergism between the DoD Humanitarian Demining Program and other similar international, regional, and U.S. efforts, and
3. establishing a comprehensive approach to providing the necessary equipment, technical data, and other support to conduct mine-awareness and mine-clearance training programs and, whenever possible, to provide equipment for newly trained personnel deployed to the field.

The important principles are to:

- enhance the capability of populations to live in a mined environment through mine-awareness and public information programs,
- promote economic stability by returning mined areas to productive use,
- promote regional stability by allowing repatriation/resettlement of displaced populations, and
- promote political stability by furnishing the host nation with a means to solve the landmine problem.

The research and development program has been accelerated to provide improved mine clearance, individual mine detection, neutralization, and mine awareness and training, while the DoD's Humanitarian Demining operational program remains flexible and sensitive to the needs of the people whom it serves. With that key understanding and focus, the DoD remains a dynamic and effective participant in the world-wide effort to solve a complex and difficult problem.

The Special Forces' "train-the-trainer" program helps to establish a contingent of host-nation demining cadre. Civil Affairs assists in building the infrastructure and establishing a solid foundation for lasting change. Mine awareness activities complete the cycle, disseminating a message throughout the world of awareness and understanding. A growing relationship develops between the trainers, Civil Affairs, mine awareness cadre, and the host nation's demining leadership. The number of countries participating has expanded from 12 to 14. Developing rapport and trust between the host nation and U.S. personnel are primary elements for establishing a cohesive and effective effort in training and teamwork. The DoD Humanitarian Demining program was designed to be efficient, resourceful, and flexible and to provide for the needs of the host nation. Ultimately, however, the most important assets of this program are demining operations. Here is a listing of the important highlights that DoD contributes to the realm of Humanitarian

Demining in FY 1997-98:

- Mine Recognition Boards
- Multimedia medical, logistical, and demining support package
- UXO and APL Reference CD-Rom
- Evaluation of 29 and equipment field-testing of 17 demining technologies
- R&D of near-term or modifiable demining technologies
- Assessment of 10 additional countries in FY 1998
- 80 Most-Common Inert Training Mine kits
- Bosnia Comic Book, 1st print: 360,000; 2nd print: 580,000.

Developing the host nation's capability to sustain its own demining effort has been the key to the U.S. policy. The program has doubled its effort to expand its support, implementing indigenous, self-sustainable, mine-awareness and mine-clearing programs. Apart from the technology, the dedication, motivation, and commitment of all the people involved in the Humanitarian Demining program are its greatest resource. Looking ahead with the goals identified, a clear vision energizes us to find the most promising means of completing the mission of assisting nations to clear landmines.

It is our hope that *The Journal* will act as a stimulus that focuses and facilitates demining efforts of all interested demining groups. The publication will provide timely information on demining activities worldwide and will introduce new developments and technologies that will be of interest to the experts in the field. With the creation of this journal, we hope to provide a forum so that activities, techniques, product knowledge, and lessons learned will be shared to facilitate effective and efficient demining programs. Given the size of the landmine problem and our limited resources, we must share data, information, and experiences that will benefit everyone involved in clearing landmines. James Madison University needs your contributions to *The Journal of Humanitarian Demining*, so we urge you to contact them with any questions, suggestions, or information that you would like to share with the international humanitarian demining community.

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