Vietnamese Ministry Tours U.S. Following Historic Agreement

Delegation of Vietnamese demining experts visits James Madison University's Mine Action Information Center as part of State Department-sponsored U.S. tour. Visit follows the United States's provision of $3 million in landmine aid to Vietnam.

by Keith Feigenbaum, MAIC

A five-man delegation of Vietnamese humanitarian demining experts recently toured the United States to gain an appreciation of the American view of humanitarian demining concepts and operations.

The U.S. Department of State-sponsored visit with the Vietnamese Ministry of Defense included meetings with top officials in the State Department and the U.S. Department of Defense. The trip was highlighted by visits to training sites, corporations involved in mine action, and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA)-sponsored MAC.

At the State Department's Humanitarian Demining Research & Development Center in Fort Belvoir, Va., and leading U.S. demining organizations in the Washington, D.C., region, the delegation made its way to JMU for briefings organized by the MAC. The Vietnamese delegation was led on a campus-wide tour of JMU and was briefed by U.S. and MAC officials on demining information management. The MAC also provided the results of its mine awareness campaign in Vietnam's Quang Tri province (site of the former DMZ).

Although the Vietnamese defense officials were concerned primarily with mine clearance activities, they showed special interest in the MAC's efforts to help the local populace in Quang Tri province and avoid mined areas. The delegation, led by Tran Quang Khinh, deputy commander of Vietnam's Ministry of National Defense, was addressed by MAC officials Anne Stewart and Terry Westoll, who ran the mine awareness program from October 1998 - March 2000.

As part of the MAC's efforts in Vietnam, the delegation visited mine action-related facilities at the Global Training Center at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., and the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and Asia-Pacific Network in Hawaii.

GERBERA: Mine Action Activities in Vietnam and Laos

The GERBERA demining organization was founded in 1994 to provide three main services: EOD activities in Germany, where the organization is based; international EOD and demining assistance; and base UXO contamination prevention from returning to their homelands. A German NGO based in Berlin recognized the need for a resettlement program and began the process of preparing the land for the villagers' return. In May of 1998, GERBERA began mapping the two villages in the districts of Cam Lo and Ai Tu. After

GERBERA Mine Action

By Lisa M. Vanada, MAIC

Overview of GERBERA

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