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A Note from the Interim Director

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A NOTE FROM INTERIM DIRECTOR SUZANNE FIEDERLEIN, PH.D.



As we approach the end of 2020, I hope this finds you and your loved ones safe, healthy, and well. It has been an unusual time for us all, with so many of our events held virtually, including the eighteenth meeting of the States Parties to the APMBC, the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the Countering Explosive Threat and Demining Symposium, all of which I had the opportunity to attend remotely. In a time of global upheaval,

I am even more convinced of the importance of information exchange as we share our organizational expertise to broaden humanitarian assistance despite COVID-19.

In this issue of *The Journal*, we feature articles on a broad range of topics that signify the outstanding work HMA organizations foster in spite of the logistical, organizational, and funding challenges our sector faces at this time.

Research and Development and Editorial. Presenting their award-winning Odyssey2025 Project, Mobility Robotics and Humanity and Inclusion (HI) discuss their use of drones and airborne IR thermography to find buried landmines under field conditions in the deserts of Chad. Additionally, Mobility Robotics and HI argue in their editorial the need for researchers to work in conjunction with HMA practitioners, highlighting the importance of maximizing the impact that research funding has on communities with explosive contamination.

Empowering Local Capacity in HMA. UNMAS DRC present on their weapons and ammunition management work to curb the proliferation of weapons and improve security in numerous regions. We also hear from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Cambodia Mine Action Authority (CMAA), and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) on their joint work to mainstream gender and diversity capacity among national mine action authorities.

Balkans. The Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) and ITF-Enhancing Human Security (ITF) present on their Mine Free Sarajevo project, utilizing land release methodology to clear nearly 8 million sq m of contaminated land in Sarajevo and its surrounding municipalities, while The HALO Trust (HALO) discusses their weapons marking and tracing program in Bosnia and Herzegovina, highlighting the collaboration between the European Armed Forces in Bosnia, Pryor Marking, and the European Force in Bosnia.

Information Management. From iMMAP, we feature two articles focusing on their information management systems and tools in use in northeast Syria and Iraq, highlighting their ability to improve decision-making processes, quality, and information sharing among actors working in the contaminated regions.

HMA and COVID-19. From the Mine Action Support Group (MASG), Wolfgang Bindseil and Ian Mansfield present a donor's perspective on HMA funding and operations against the backdrop of the global pandemic. Facing significant challenges to funding and operations, the authors present the challenges discussed during a May 2020 meeting.

IMAS. Roly Evans from the GICHD reviews the changes and improvements to IMAS 10.60 Safety & Occupational Health—Investigation and Reporting of Accidents and Incidents. Key updates include the importance of evidence in reporting, simplification of the reporting timelines, and a new system of different investigation levels, among others.

Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE). The Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace - Descontamina Colombia reviews their study of EORE activities between 2012 and 2019 in Colombia.

Historical Perspective. And from CISR's former director, Dr. Ken Rutherford, we have an article that looks at the use of landmines during the American Civil War, following the publication of his book, *America's Buried History: Landmines in the Civil War*.

In looking toward the Spring issue of *The Journal*, we are soliciting for a broad range of topics including Ukraine, the environmental challenges of HMA, battle area and urban clearance, the use of prosthetics, mobile and efficient data collection methods, and commercial off-the-shelf tools for mine action, among others. We also want to continue to hear how organizations have adapted their operations throughout the global pandemic. For more information, please see *The Journal's* Calls for Papers at <https://www.jmu.edu/cisr/journal/cfps.shtml>.

In closing, I wish you a safe and healthy 2021, one filled with more of the personal interactions that nurture us and that we all have missed in 2020.

Suzanne

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