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The Ongoing Mission of POF

POF provides humanitarian relief and modern prosthetic care to amputees in developing countries.

POF provides emergency aid and long-term assistance to amputees in need. The organization offers medical care, prosthetic devices, and rehabilitation services to those affected by war, disease, or natural disasters.

Dr. Ernest Burgess

Burgess pioneered hip replacement surgery, new techniques in amputation surgery, and became the mentor to generations of orthopedic surgery residents. He introduced the concept of rehabilitation training in the United States and emphasized the importance of prosthetic devices in improving amputees' quality of life.

American veteran amputees who had returned to Vietnam and were aware of the desperate inadequacies of medical services and prosthetics there, asked Burgess to help the thousands of Vietnamese men, women, and children in need of such care. In 1988, with the assistance of volunteers, POF began planning for a demonstration clinic in Vietnam. The Prosthetics Outreach Center (POC) opened in 1991 to provide free limbs to amputees in desperate need of prostheses. To date, thousands of amputees have received a prosthetic free of charge.

International Outreach

The essence of POF service to amputees in Southeast Asia is providing mobile prosthetic treatment to rural areas where many of the amputees live. POF also provides clinical and technical consultation to international organizations and health ministries of developing countries who seek effective solutions to amputee treatment.

Technology and Innovations

Developed at PRS

• Immediate post-operative fitting (IPOF) of a prosthetic improved healing and rehabilitation time considerably.

• The Seattle Foot®, which has an internal spring, opened the door for amputees seeking an active lifestyle. "Compliant foot" based on this model has also improved comfort for amputees of all ages.

• Burt's discovery in the 1970s that prosthesis could have a functional impact on the amputated limb initiated the use of a "compliant foot" which improved comfort and daily activities.

• POF conducts ongoing research into prosthetic components which are durable enough to withstand the harsh physical and climatic conditions typical to tropical regions.

• POF assists communities in becoming self-reliant by establishing clinics and workshops to manufacture prosthetic components with local materials.

• POF serves as a technical and clinical resource for amputees, government institutions, and humanitarian organizations.

Philippines

The Prosthetics Outreach Foundation has conducted AFMA training for the staff. This new center will act as a catalyst for improved prosthetic care for all of the Philippines.

Nigeria

POF assisted the Mercy Ships organization with the creation of their mobile prosthetics workshop, including design, installation, and staff training. This unique self-contained workshop is housed in a 20-foot-long shipping container. The workshop was transported to Lagos, Nigeria, where it provided prosthetic services for the surrounding region. Mathews provided the Mercy Ships staff with training in AFMA techniques and in the fabrication of the Moleskin. Only two staff members were needed to complete more than 200 limbs in this very efficient facility. Following the Hurricane Mitch disaster, POF donated a shipment of prosthetic feet to the National Rehabilitation Center in Managua, Nicaragua, to help those injured.

Little Footprints

POF announced plans in June 1999 to send 250 prosthetic feet to landmine victims in Albanian and Kosovo. Two hundred adult and 50 child-sized artificial limbs will be distributed in 1999 to help sustain survivors in this war torn region during the transition to peace.

Little Footprints

POF announced in July 1999 a goal to provide artificial limbs to 500 Vietnamese women and children in need during the year.

2000. The estimated cost to complete this project is $100,000.00. Beginning in 1996, Prosthetics Outreach Foundation began a series of development projects with the goal of improving the quality of the prosthetic service in Vietnam and enabling the Vietnamese people to become self-sufficient in prosthetic technology and clinical services. The staff at POF welcomes the opportunity to share this clinical technology and we look forward to a dialogue with colleagues who have suggestions for improvement.

Ba Vi Orthopedic Technology Center

This center, located 50 kilometers west of Hanoi, is the national manufacturing center for rehabilitation products in Vietnam. The buildings and machines are old, but the staff has the energy and enthusiasm to design and manufacture new products of improved quality and function. This collaborative project could serve as a model of self-reliance for other countries.

Technological Updates

• EB1 Foot: The foot component of prosthetics has historically been a design challenge in regard to the durability of the prosthetics. A team of engineers and prosthetists both in Hanoi and Seattle set about to design, produce, and manufacture a durable, locally manufactured foot named the EB1.

• Modular Components: In addition to the foot manufacture, a system of modular above-knee and below-knee components has also been manufactured. These include a knee joint, 30mm pylons, and an alignment adapter with mounting plate, monolimb bushing and suspension rods. Local suppliers have also been located for 6mm, 8mm and 10mm bolts, cotton stump socks, leather suspension belts, pelte and copolymer plastic materials.

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