



## Newsletter July 2023



Another exciting month as we head into the mid-summer season in the Northern Hemisphere and mid-Winter in the Southern Hemisphere.

In Asia we said goodbye to Brian Fitzgerald who decided to pursue other opportunities and welcome back Paul Eldred as Program Manager for our Fiji program.

In Europe Lee and Mark Lasley are pursuing some exciting new opportunities as well as sustaining a very active EUCOM PSSM and EOD Training agenda, and we welcome new team members to our PSSM team and EOD Training team.

While I can't seem to believe the year is half gone (already!) there are lots of positive things happening.

We have an invitation to the HDR&D's annual Workshop in Reston, VA in August and we plan to attend. This will be a great opportunity to determine the current HDR&D goals and objectives and look for areas where our interests converge.

I have a meeting with Sean Burke and Dan Clairemont from HDR&D on 28 July and we are currently assembling our preliminary 2024 proposals for HDR&D and solicit your ideas.



Al Vosburgh, President & CEO



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Our proposal for 2023-2027 operations in the Republic of the Marshall Islands has been submitted to PM/WRA and is making its way through the system. This proposal recommends survey and clearance operations on four different atolls over 42 months in RMI. This project will be managed by Adan Morones and a team he assembles to work on Maloelap, Wotje, Jaluit and Mili Atolls. We look forward to working again with the U.S. Embassy Majuro, and the RMI Historic Preservation Office.

The HQ is already moving ahead to accomplish our strategic goal of improving our internal governance. Mike has engaged a new company to manage our Information Technology and provide improved cybersecurity. Paul Eldred reports he had good results working with them to set up his Golden West computer.

In the Philippines, our developmental MEC/UXO project has been engaged for ten additional days of effort on a U.S. funded infrastructure project. CJ is accomplishing great things and doing hero work helping to keep the project on track. His team of retired Filipino EOD operators has the experience and skills to do the work and to facilitate the project.



Dr C.J Cowlin

We are always looking for good news stories to share in our monthly newsletters. Our goal is to help get the word out and to keep the rest of the organization informed. Again, this was one of the goals of our strategic plan, but Paul Emmerson and I can't do it alone. If you have ideas for a short article or a news item you want to share, please let us know.

Al Vosburgh  
President & CEO, Golden West Humanitarian Foundation

## MEET THE NEW MEMBERS OF OUR TEAM

### Paul Eldred – Country Manager, Fiji

Meet Paul Eldred, with a remarkable career spanning over 23 years in the British Army's esteemed Royal Engineers, Paul achieved the rank of Warrant Officer Class I as the Regimental Sergeant Major. During his tenure in the military, Paul specialized in EOD, search operations, and mine warfare. He fearlessly served on the front lines of conflict in Northern Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, and Macedonia.

Seeking new challenges, Paul embarked on a mission with the United Nations and a commercial demining company, Ronco Consulting Corp, in Iraq for two years, was Chief of Operations for South Sudan for four years, before moving to South East Asia.



Paul Eldred

Paul's unwavering commitment to humanitarian causes brought him to Thailand, where he collaborated with Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) to draft the Thai National Mine Action



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Standards. He was Operations Manager for NPA Vietnam, and Technical Operations Manager for Mines Advisory Group (MAG) in Cambodia.

From 2014 to 2019, Paul made a significant impact as the Project Leader for Golden West in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. Guiding our own initiatives with unwavering dedication, he left an indelible mark on the region.

Today, Paul has once again found himself back with us at Golden West Humanitarian Foundation, this time as the Country Manager in Fiji. There, he will work with the Fijian military, equipping them with Level 1-3 EOD expertise.

With a wealth of operational knowledge at the United Nations, commercial, and NGO levels, Paul is a true authority in the field of mine action.



His expertise spans a vast array of disciplines, from surveying and manual clearance to bomb disposal, Mine Detection Dogs, mechanical solutions, and even remote bomb cutting capabilities. Furthermore, he has been instrumental in designing and implementing comprehensive training programs associated with these disciplines.

### James 'Jack' Hoffman – Training EOD Logistics Manager / EOD Advisor

James Hoffman, "Jack" to his friends, hails from Weatherford, Texas. He joined the Marine Corps via the recruit depot @ Paris Island and then proceeded to Fort McClellan, Alabama, where he immersed himself in the intricacies of NBCD (Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Defense) school. This specialized training equipped him with the knowledge and expertise to tackle the most challenging threats. Jack's first duty station was at Camp Hansen in Okinawa. It was there that his path took an exciting turn as he joined the 1st Recon Company.



Jack Hoffman

In 2005, Jack embarked on a new chapter of his career, attending the prestigious NAVSCHOLEOD (Naval School. Explosive Ordnance Disposal). With an illustrious military career spanning over two decades, Jack retired from the Marine Corps in 2018 as a Marine Master Sergeant and Master EOD Technician..

Following his retirement, Jack worked with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Somalia. for four years, serving as the IED/PDT Lead Mentor and Subject Matter Expert for the AMISOM (African Mission in Somalia) Project. In this role, he imparted his vast knowledge, instructing on counter-IED techniques and developing essential tactics, techniques, and procedures for five Troop Contributing Countries.

Jack will now support EUCOM, ordering vital EOD equipment for contracts with PAE and BAH. Whenever the need arises, he can deploy as an EOD Advisor and Mentor, providing invaluable guidance.



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Afifa Habbassi – Technical Advisor, Physical Security & Stockpile Mgmt.

Hailing from Tunisia, Afifa's exceptional 18 year career spans both military and civilian realms. Armed with a Master's degree in Engineering, Afifa commenced her professional path as an officer in the Tunisian Army, specializing in Ammunition Management. Her exceptional skills and commitment led her to become a renowned expert in CIED (Counter Improvised Explosive Device) and EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) with IMAS 3+ certification.

Afifa has been at the forefront of HMA programs throughout her career. Her extensive involvement with UNMAS, UNLIREC, and ICRC has taken her to missions across N.Africa, Mali, the Central African Republic, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and the Caribbean.



Afifa Habbassi

Afifa is recognized as a UNSAFERGUARD ammunition expert, contributing her invaluable expertise to enhance the safety and security of ammunition stockpiles. She has also played a pivotal role in providing technical PSSM expertise in conflict areas and disarmament programs, working tirelessly to mitigate risks and ensure the safe handling of dangerous materials.

We will be profiling Afifa & her journey even further in next month's edition of GWHF Newsletter ... Watch This Space ...



### Program Update

Summer in Vietnam is the most dangerous part of the year and poses the greatest risk of drowning for children. School is out for the Summer, temperatures are high and children like to play in the water to cool off. Unfortunately, many bodies of water are isolated and unsupervised children who cannot swim are at great risk of drowning.



Swim for Life Vietnam, supported by Golden West and CTFK/GHAI, conducted drowning prevention events and field visits to pools across five pools, in three districts of Quang Tri Province.

Following the Drowning Prevention opening ceremony in Quang Tri Province, Thanh An Secondary School, Cam Lo, met with SFL and committed to registering 160 children.



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## Swimming Lessons - Vinh Giang

On June 13<sup>th</sup> 2023 at the pool of Vinh Giang Primary school, swimming lessons for 270 children began in a ceremony attended by Provincial DOET, District BOET, CTFK/GHAI, Swim for Life, teachers, and Vinh Giang school leadership.



## Drowning Prevention Program - Ai Tu

16 June, Drowning Prevention Program began at Ai Tu Primary School with 205 children.

21 June, Drowning Prevention Program began at Tran Huu Duc Primary & Secondary School with 250 children.

## Field Assistance - Vinh Giang and Thanh An

19- 21 June, Swim for Life conducted field assistance visits to pools in Vinh Giang and Thanh An, supporting teachers for the first lessons, helping organize classes, teaching methods/skills, critiquing each lesson to help teachers improve their skills



## Drowning Prevention Program - Trieu Trung

26 June, at the pool of Trieu Trung Primary and Secondary School, we began a drowning prevention program with 309 children registered.