IS THIS YOUR LAST BULLETIN?

Due to changes to data protection legislation, we cannot send you further Bulletins unless you ask us to do so. If you did not send the stamped postcard which accompanied the last Bulletin back to us, or contacted us by email, then this, unfortunately is your last Bulletin.

A large proportion of our income is received in response to the quarterly Bulletin, where we outline individual projects and their needs. Unsurprisingly, it is the charity’s main means of fundraising and that allows us to get the much-needed funds to the people who need them.

But we now must have your permission to continue sending you the Bulletin.

We have had a good response so far, and we thank you most sincerely if you have already told us that you would like to receive further Bulletins. But please contact us now if you want to continue receiving them. Either:

- Write to us using the pre-paid postcard sent with the last Bulletin, or
- Send a note to:

Lynn Firth, MSAVLCC
1 Hillside,
Tregunnel Park,
Newquay
CORNWALL TR7 2AJ
Or email:
msavlc.treasurer@gmail.com
with your name, postcode and YES (if you wish to remain on our mailing list) or NO (if you would like to be removed).

Please remember, without your donations we cannot survive.

On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank you most sincerely for your past support; I hope we can stay in touch and continue the important work that we do together.

Lynn Firth,
Trustee

Please note: We will always protect your personal information, and never pass it on to a third party.

Without your support MSAVLCC will not be able to continue supporting young Cambodian children such as these.
On Friday March 16th 2018, with talk of peace and cooperation rather than hatred, Vietnam marked 50 years since the My Lai massacre in a memorial ceremony that was attended by over a thousand people. It included survivors of the massacre, their families, and around 60 U.S. Vietnam war veterans and anti-war activists. Provincial official Mr. Dang Ngoc Dung said Vietnam now wants to set aside the past and befriend other countries to build a better future in which peace and happiness can thrive.

My Lai is situated in Quang Ngai Province in central Vietnam. There, at 7.30 a.m. on the 16th March, 1968, U.S. troops swept through four hamlets in the Son My sub-district, systematically killing 504 villagers, most of them the elderly, women and children.

The area was beautiful; peaceful, with rice paddies and small houses all around. The Americans claimed that it was a stronghold for the Viet Cong. However, they encountered no resistance as they advanced on the hamlets, after bombarding them with artillery, rocket and machine gun fire from helicopter gunships. Charlie Company, led by Lieutenant William Calley landed by helicopter, advanced through the fields and the atrocities began.

Villagers were shot and bayoneted, hand grenades were thrown into houses and bomb shelters, crops were destroyed, livestock slaughtered and houses burnt to the ground. About 150 unarmed villagers were rounded up, herded into a ditch and mowed down by machine gun fire. One man was thrown alive into a well, and then shot.

Over the next few hours unspeakable crimes were committed, as command helicopters circled overhead and American boats patrolled offshore. Groups of civilians, including women and children, were assembled and executed, and fleeing villagers were machine-gunned down. As the massacre was taking place, young girls and women were raped by groups of soldiers. At the end of the murderous rampage 504 people had died, including 182 women, 17 of them pregnant, 173 children and 37 men over 60. One soldier shot himself in the foot to extricate himself from the slaughter; he was the only American casualty in the entire operation.

However, one brave U.S. officer, Captain Hugh Thompson, saw what was happening and put his helicopter down between the fleeing villagers and the G.I’s. He rescued about ten of them, his two crewmen turning their guns on their U.S. commander whilst doing so! However, Thomson was initially vilified on his return home, and eventually died an alcoholic.

The soldiers tried to cover up the atrocities by covering the bodies with straw and burning them. Later the U.S. military ploughed the ground to destroy the evidence of their crimes, but although the troops who participated were ordered to keep their mouths shut, several disobeyed and told their stories on returning to the U.S.A. All levels of U.S. Army command tried to cover up the massacre, but eventually Lieutenant Calley was made a scapegoat and sentenced to life imprisonment. But he only served three years under house arrest! Of course, he didn’t act alone! Bizarrely, the event was painstakingly documented by a U.S. Military photographer, and some of these dreadful photos are on display in a small museum at the site of the massacre, along with sad little mementoes of that tragic day.

Trustees from MSAVLC visited My Lai in 2011, and their emotional reflections are recalled in our August 2012 Bulletin. They saw how the area had been reconstructed to reflect the aftermath of that fateful day. Shacks, burnt out shells of homes, bomb shelters and mass graves stood in their original locations, each marked with a plaque listing the names and ages of the families that had been slaughtered there.

There is a huge memorial plaque with the names of the 504 victims and their ages, engraved on it. There is one dramatic sculpture of an elderly woman holding up her fist in defiance,
Disability Development Services Program (DDSP) is a Cambodian non-government organisation, launched in January 2003. It is one of the few organisations in Cambodia providing services to disabled people. It is based in Pursat, a poor rural province in central Cambodia.

DDSP’s objectives are to enable disabled people to access services to improve their quality of life, to raise awareness among communities about disabled people’s rights and opportunities, and to help other service providers in Pursat to include disabled people in their activities.

The population of the Province is about 400,000 and of these about 18,900 people have disabilities. These are caused mostly by landmine accidents, work accidents, diseases such as polio and cerebral palsy or birth defects.

DDSP provide practical help to these people, nearly all of whom live in poverty, in the rural areas. They provide latrines, wheelchairs, wells and fresh water filters, as well as giving practical and emotional support and advice. DDSP also try to set the people up in small businesses, in order to support themselves and their families. They have provided business start-up loans, as well as chickens, pigs, cows and buffalo for some of their clients.

MSAVLC funding supports their Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Rehabilitation Project (PQR Project), one of four projects which DDSP runs at present. This project focuses on four main areas:

- **Basic Needs** – Disabled people’s health, hygiene, nutrition, housing and emergency needs.
- **Rehabilitation Needs** – Home-based therapy and rehabilitation equipment, and referral to rehabilitation services outside the community.
- **Social Needs** – Psycho-social counselling, confidence and empowerment, education and vocational training.
- **Economic Needs** – Access to micro-credit and capital for income generation.

The Stoeng Pursat River Run, which is organised by DDSP, integrates able-bodied and disabled adults and children.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

You are cordially invited to the MSAVLC Annual General Meeting which will be at 6.00 pm on Tuesday 10 July 2018 at
The Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in London,
12-14 Victoria Road, London W8 5RD.

The meeting will be followed by a short address from H. E Ambassador Tran Ngoc An.

The Agenda and Annual Report for 2017 will be available at the meeting.

IN THE NEWS

The article in February’s Bulletin about our work with the victims of Agent Orange certainly did strike a chord with some of our readers.

We are so very grateful for the many individual donations made in February, some of which were earmarked especially to be used to further our project with the Vietnam Victims of Agent Orange (VAVA).

Moreover, freelance journalist John Green had an article published in the Morning Star drawing attention to the plight of Agent Orange victims in Vietnam. Once again, MSAVLC was credited in his article.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As a direct result of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), it looks as though the charity is going to lose touch with many of our valued supporters.

If this is your last Bulletin, on behalf of the Trustees, I would like to thank you very much for your support and your donations in the past. The money which you have donated has made a real difference to the sick and the needy in South-East Asia.

If you do not want this to be last that you hear from us, please contact us and we will continue to send you the Bulletin, free of charge, by post or email.

Now, more than ever, we need your help in finding new supporters for our work, and the printed Bulletin is a really effective way for us to reach out.

When you have finished reading your Bulletin, please share it with your friends, or leave it where others may find it, on a coffee table, at church or in a waiting room.

Many thanks,
Peter Lidgard.

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