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Dear Family, Friends and Supporters of ASK@VSO,

It is my great pleasure to report to you on our latest mission to Kon Tum. Our trip to Vietnam came on the back of a tour to Gallipoli where along with 90 other serving and ex Royal Australian Engineers and others, we commemorated two significant events for Engineers. The first was the 100th anniversary of the completion of the pier at ANZAC Cove, known as Watson's Pier and the second was to celebrate the dinner that those Army Engineers held in the trenches, to mark the completion of the pier. Those events occurred on 18th June 1915. Lieutenant Stan Watson was in charge of the construction. That date also was the 100th anniversary of Wellington's defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. The dinner has been enjoyed by Army Engineers and others ever since and is known as the Waterloo Dinner.

We held a memorial service at the site of Watson's Pier. Members of Stan Watson's family attended. That evening we held our Waterloo Dinner although the menu and venue were vastly different to 100 years ago.



Head of Corps, Royal Australian Engineers, Brigadier Wayne Budd and friends at the Waterloo Dinner. Bill Watson (grandson of Lt. Stan Watson) Joshua Funder (great grandson) and Derek Smith at the site of Watsons Pier 2015

Although we do enjoy being in Kon Tum, this year has been tinged with sadness. We have lost three lovely ladies. Teresa's young sister Mary Loan succumbed to cancer on 26 January. She was not yet 30 years of age. We shared many happy times with her and her family at gatherings at Teresa's home. Rhonda's sister Margaret, suddenly passed away on 25 April. Marg was a long time supporter of our work at Kon Tum and she accompanied us on our 2013 mission. Neill Garland's wife of 54 years passed away on 24 June. Terry and Neill came to Vietnam with us in 2010. They sponsor Boi and have been long time backers of our efforts in the Vinh Son orphanages. A special mass was held in the Wooden Church in memory of these three wonderful ladies. We were able to attend that service. They are now in God's care. May they rest in peace.



Marg second from left. Mary Loan In yellow top. 2013 Terry and Neill Garland 2010 With children at an orphanage Outside Wooden Church after the Memorial Mass 2015

Rhonda and I then flew to Vietnam and on to Kon Tum. One of our first tasks was to visit Vinh Son 4 to check on the kitchen/dining room project and to attach a plaque from Townsville Central Rotary Club to the dormitory they funded earlier. When folks visit the Vinh Son orphanages now they see plaques from Townsville Sunrise Rotary, Townsville Central Rotary and Redcliffe RSL. Visitors now know that Aussies have been at work.

The dining room is great but there is still work to be done to complete the kitchen. The refurbished dormitory is 100% on what it was. VS4 kids are in good health and happy. Most were on school vacation when we were there. They work like USA so most children must return to their villages. None of this could happen without the great financial support of our Rotary Clubs, RSL and other supporters. You are putting smiles on little faces. Well done.



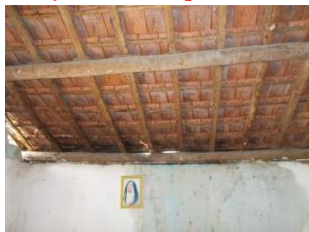
Rotary Central Plaque



Builder Monk Tieng and kids at VS4



5 year old Phuoc VS4



Before – dorm with leaking roof



Sleeping benches for kids



Sleeping rough VS4



After – the new sleeping arrangements



Part of new toilet area



The refurbished dorm from the outside



Before – the dining area. Dark and gloomy



More of the same



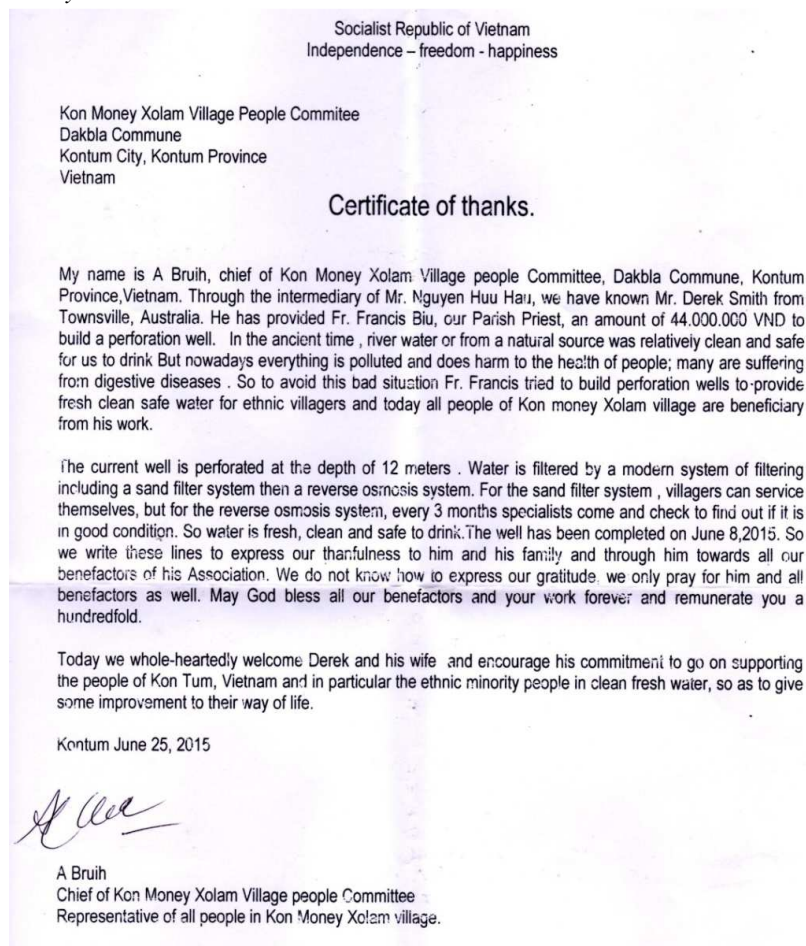
Kitchen washing up area



After – The kids now have a happy place to dine 110% on what it was before.



I had been approached some time ago by good friend in Kon Tum Mr. Hau. He asked if we could support the construction of a well in a local village. Although most of my work is confined to the Vinh Son orphanages, some donors were happy to support this project. The well was to be constructed at Kon Money Xolam village. It would provide clean, filtered water to over 2000 people. The official opening took place while we were there. Rhonda and I were quite overwhelmed by the ceremony which included a procession of Montagnard women in traditional dress, village men beating gongs and village dignitaries. After speeches, the village held a feast all washed down with jar wine, the local home made brew that is guaranteed to lift the head off your shoulders. ASK@VSO contributed \$2500 (Vietnam Dong 43,300,000). The villagers contributed \$550. I have attached the Certificate of Thanks we were given by the village chief, and some pictures. It was a great outcome for little outlay.



Village Montagnards welcome us



Village Chief passes me Certificate of Thanks



Part of the filter system for the well



More of the well system incl sand filter



The official group photo



Rhonda with Coi enjoying the feast

I have just received a donation from Gary Jessup who has been selling licorice to his work mates on Barrow Island, Western Australia. Gary and his wife Karen were with us in Kon Tum last year. They sponsor two children at VS1. We are looking to construct another well in a village near Kon Tum so to those folks on Barrow Island, thank you for giving Gary your support. Your help makes a huge difference to folks who do not have access to clean water.

We dealt with a couple of medical cases during our stay. One of our sponsored lads, Khoi, had lanced his foot with a stick while he was working in the fields. He spent some time in hospital but is now fine. Our lad, Coi had an ear infection which he contracted while cleaning his ears with a twig. He won't be doing that any more. A couple of visits to the ENT specialist sorted that. Also checked on a young lad at VS1 who also had foot problems. All are now fine and our dear friend Sr. Gabriel of VS3 came off a motor bike and broke her leg. She is only 78 years old mind you. We arranged X Rays, crutches and medication for her. We kept our good friend and nurse, Sue Gray informed. She will follow up on these cases when she returns to Kon Tum next year.



Khoi at Kon Tum hospital and his poor foot.

Child from VS1 having his foot treated. Sr. G with her broken leg

We were on the go during our stay in Kon Tum. We arrived on 24 June and left on 7 July. We squeezed in 16 visits to orphanages and 5 village visits. We took some of the sponsored kids out for a meal and were treated to some meals at VS1. Sr. Imelda is a great cook. When at full tilt she is feeding over 200 children. Sponsors have also funded musical instruments and other items to help make the children's lives happier. I have included pictures of some of the kids.

I do sincerely thank all those who contribute to our work. Without your donations and support, we could not engage in the projects that make life for the 770 or so children and many of the Montagnard villagers, just that little bit better. To the sponsors of some of the kids, thank you for your continuing support. You are making a difference to their future prospects as well as giving them a sense that someone cares about them even though they have never met you.

To all, I wish you a great year. Be safe, be happy and know that the kids you are helping in Kon Tum, pray for you.



My kindest regards

Derek Smith

ASK@VSO