

# UN Recognizes Humanitarian Work of West Virginia's Schonstedt Instrument Company

Posted At : February 26, 2014 8:09 AM | Posted By : Admin

Related Categories: Humanitarian Demining

**Jefferson County, West Virginia** Since 2007, the Schonstedt Humanitarian Demining Initiative (SHDI), an initiative of Schonstedt Instrument Company, Kearneysville, W. Va., has supported the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in its efforts to eradicate explosive remnants of war from countries around the world.

To date, 477 donated demining tools are at work in 27 countries. This project represents Schonstedt's open-ended commitment to humanitarian demining where it is most needed in the world. In recognition, and in addition to a permanent display of a Schonstedt demining tool at the United Nations (UN), a second magnetic locator unit is now featured in a recently opened exhibition in the Visitor's Center at UN Headquarters in New York City.

"This is our way of helping to rid the world of unseen explosives that maim and kill indiscriminately that keep people from moving freely about their villages, tending their crops or sending their children to school. It's one way we're able to do some good in the world," said Bob Ebberson, Program Manager at Schonstedt.

Seven years ago, in response to an unmet need for humanitarian demining among the world's underserved populations, Schonstedt reached out to the UN with an offer of assistance. It would provide free magnetic locators for use in areas of the world where demining would not otherwise be possible, but was desperately needed. UNMAS agreed to identify and prioritize those areas and facilitate deployment of the tools. For every magnetic locator purchased for donation to UNMAS, Schonstedt matches the donation, unit-for-unit.

The International Mine Action Training Center in Nairobi, Kenya was the first recipient of magnetic locators deployed as part of the SHDI program. Most recently, Schonstedt locators have been shipped to Mali and Afghanistan.

"Partnership is key to making United Nations work successful," said Agnès Marcaillou, Director of UNMAS. "There are partnerships with UN agencies, regional organizations like the African Union and partnerships with small businesses and non-governmental organizations. One special partnership that assists the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service is with Schonstedt Instrument Company. The company has provided hundreds of donated magnetic locators to help us find mines and unexploded ordnance - a very practical and easy to use tool." Schonstedt magnetic locators operate on the principle of magnetic fluxgate. The fluxgate consists of two sensors separated by a fixed distance and mechanically aligned. In the absence of a ferromagnetic material, the earth's magnetic flux is the same at both sensors, therefore the fluxgate output is zero. When an object close to the bottom sensor alters the earth's magnetic flux due to its own magnetic field, the balance of the gate is altered, producing a measurable output.

Magnetic locators detect ferrous metals exclusively. They will not detect non-ferrous metals such as

aluminum, brass or copper. The benefits of a ferrous metal locator is that it will not register 'false positives' caused by non-ferrous metals, and will detect ferrous metals to a much greater depth than an all-metal detector. Depending on its mass and orientation, the magnetic locator will detect a ferrous metal target to a depth of 30 feet.

Founded in 1953 by Erick O. Schonstedt, the company took its early shape from the aerospace industry, producing magnetometers (which measure magnetic fields) for over 400 satellites as well as the Hubble telescope. Today Schonstedt specializes in manufacturing instruments to locate iron and steel (ferrous) objects, and pipes and cables (linear underground conductors), providing solutions for the detection and location of objects and phenomena below the surface of the ground or water. Schonstedt's patented Heliflux® magnetic sensor technology is unsurpassed for its environmental stability and ability to detect ferrous objects to extreme depths. Designed to withstand the rigors of daily on-site usage and a wide range of environmental conditions, Schonstedt locators last 100 to 250 percent longer than competitor instruments.

Businesses in Jefferson County, W.Va., are supported by the Jefferson County Development Authority, which provides an increased and diverse tax base for Jefferson County. The organization advances economic development, supports existing businesses and stimulates and promotes industrial, commercial and agricultural expansion. Located in the eastern panhandle of the state, Jefferson County enjoys a strategic Mid-Atlantic location, 60 miles from Washington D.C. and 45 minutes from Dulles Airport, with quick and easy access to Interstate 80 and the Eastern business corridor. It offers a business-friendly climate and the nation's fourth lowest cost of doing business.

Founded after the end of the Second World War, the UN is an international organization made up of 193 member states committed to maintaining international peace and security. UNMAS was established in 1997 to serve as the UN focal point for mine action and to support the UN's vision of "a world free of the threat of landmines and unexploded ordnance, where individuals and communities live in a safe environment conducive to development, and where mine survivors are fully integrated into their societies." UNMAS collaborates with 11 other UN departments, agencies, programs and funds to ensure an effective, proactive and coordinated response to the problems of landmines and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions.