



January - March 2005

By David Skeat

## Mateship In The Face Of Disaster

In the past two months the world has seen two major disasters occur that have cost thousands of lives. In early December multiple typhoons ripped through the Philippines, these were followed by mud slides. Hundreds died and many thousands were displaced as whole communities disappeared under the mud.

On December 26th the world's deadliest tsunami took more than 120,000 lives in 10 nations. The effects of this one disaster were unprecedented and it will take years for the victims of the tsunami to get their lives back together.

ARMS has responded to both of these disasters. In the Philippines RescueNet went in and spent three weeks helping the victims of the typhoons and mudslides. Over that period they treated thousands of patients and travelled hundreds of miles going to the remotest areas affected by the disaster. In the case of the tsunami ARMS, Partners and two members of the Oaktree Foundation went into Aceh to give emergency aid to those who had survived this tragic catastrophe. I was on that team and can tell you that the impact the tsunami in Aceh alone was devastating.

ARMS is running an appeal to help the victims of the Tsunami disaster your donation will help us to reach out to those whose lives have been ravaged by the uncontrollable forces of nature.

Victims of any disaster are people like you and me, as Australians we can remember times when others helped us in our times of trouble. Australians appreciate that when your caught up in a disaster it is nice to know that you have your *mates* looking out for you. Those caught up in these recent disasters need hope, and by giving to the *ARMS Tsunami Appeal* you can give help to do just that.

In Aceh I met a school teacher who had horrific wounds from the Tsunami. I was working with a medical team and had to personally cut out of this man's body the infected flesh that was threatening to cause further physical harm to him by giving him a very serious infection. After I finished dressing the wound, the man looked up at me and said through the interpreter that by being there for him I had given him hope. This man and his wife had lost their family in the tsunami and were trying to make sense of what they had left. Hope for them came in the shape of an Aussie paramedic who in the context of their life's worst moment was able to be a *mate* to them. Not everyone can go, but we can pray, and we can all give.

Putting caring people on the ground and providing care and support to help them make a new start is what ARMS is about. Your support of our Tsunami Appeal will help us to save lives and bring hope to those caught up in the terrible disasters that have ravaged our world over the past two months.

**Book now!**

Melbourne T-98312406  
Adelaide T-83901040

### ARMS SPECIAL EVENTS

#### FundRaising Dinner With Steve&Oddny Gumaer ...

ARMS invites you to a fundraising dinner party with Steve&Oddny Gumaer the founder of Partners ministry. Enjoy a 3 course dinner & dessert. An offering will be taken with the proceeds going to the work of ARMS. Time: 6:30 - 9:00 pm. Cost: \$25 per person.

<sup>1</sup> February 19th, 05  
YWAM Melbourne  
1 Kent Rd  
Surrey Hills.

<sup>2</sup> February 26th,05  
YWAM Adelaide  
197 Norton Summit Rd  
Norton Summit.



By David Skeat

# Tsunami of Terror

We have all heard the news. On December 26<sup>th</sup> the world's largest recorded tsunami killed over 160,000 people. Many thousands are still missing! Up to a million people are displaced; many more could die if the disaster sites are not cleared of bodies and infrastructure such as sanitation, clean water restored.

On December 28<sup>th</sup> Steve Gumaer phoned me and asked me to accompany him to Aceh (Indonesia) the worst affected area. In a matter of days what had begun as a small team ended up being a team of 21 specialists who were deployed and operational in Aceh within a matter of days.

The team provided clean water supplies to three camps, gave medical treatment to refugees and

**“ When the waves began to recede the people of Banda Aceh were dazed by the ferocity of the Tsunami and the carnage that it had left in its wake. ”**

distributed food to starving refugees who had not received any relief. (I have published a personal report of this time on my staff page on the ARMS website.)

Prior to the Tsunami Aceh had been rocked by a severe earthquake and buildings in Banda Aceh had collapsed as a consequence. The earthquake triggered the Tsunami which rushed towards the coastline at great speed. The debris from the earthquake provided the weapon through which so many people were killed. One witness I interviewed lived by the sea and said that he came out of his house and saw that the sea was gone, and a large wave the height of two coconut palms was racing towards the shore. This was a clean wave. It hit the shore and receded quickly; but the second wave was the one that did most of the damage coming a few minutes later. The second wave picked up all the debris that the earthquake had shaken loose carrying it up to 6km into Aceh.

In the low parts of the city of Banda Aceh whole suburbs were wiped out. Rock, rubble, wood and automobiles were pushed far inland and dumped by the second wave. People were killed as they were caught up in the

# Tsunami of

deluge and crushed by the debris or buried alive as the wave dumped its cargo and slowly began to recede. Bridges were destroyed, the coastline was changed, wells were filled with salt water, crops were ruined, 80,000 people killed and a further 50,000 presumed dead. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced.

Among the buildings destroyed were local clinics, pharmacies and hospitals. Among the dead were doctors, nurses and other medical professionals. People not only lost their homes and family, but also lost the basic health infrastructure on which they would ordinarily rely in such a time of crisis.

When the waves began to recede the people of Banda Aceh were dazed by the ferocity of the Tsunami and the carnage that it had left in its wake. In disbelief people began to search for their friends and family among the mud and debris. Some found their loved ones, others never will.

It is into this environment that aid agencies and rescue workers found themselves as they moved in to Aceh to offer the assistance needed. When I was there a few



**“ The team I served on provided medical assistance, food, clean water and other services that helped homeless refugees to survive. ”**

female team members prepared to leave to return home a refugee woman came out of her tent and hugged her tightly, for a few minutes they cried together. Kindness and hope are integrally linked and when kindness reaches into someone's life, hope is ignited and a deep felt response can often result. If we are caught in a crisis and can't see a way out, kindness is needed to re-ignite hope within us.

The Bible says that hope deferred makes the heart sick (Proverbs 13:12). The victims of the tsunami are in a place where they need to experience hope to help bring them out of the sadness. A delayed response to their need may only cause further sadness. We can provide hope for the victims of the Boxing Day tsunami by praying for them, by giving to the ARMS Tsunami Appeal (which is providing direct aid to victims of the tsunami), and by supporting efforts to help the victims of this disaster through the provision of healthcare, clean water and reconstruction.

Donations over \$2 made to this appeal are tax deductible and can be made through the back page of Focus on Mercy or by making a direct deposit into our bank account;

ARMS Overseas Aid Fund  
Bank Of Melbourne - Camberwell  
BSB: 033039  
Account No. 327773

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David cleans and dresses wounds off the back of a truck

days after the tsunami hit it was apparent that many still had not come to terms with their situation. How could they? Even experienced aid workers were overcome by the magnitude of this disaster. One Moslem man in Aceh told me that all the nations that were affected by the tsunami must have sinned greatly to incur such a terrible judgment from God, but God is innocent. It is the compassion of God that is being expressed to the victims of the tsunami through the influx of aid and workers into the region, not the wrath of God, being expressed through the tsunami.

The team I served on provided medical assistance, food, clean water and other services that helped homeless refugees to survive. A more detailed account of what the team did can be found on



A smile among the pain . The universal language of love is shared.

my personal web page on the arms website [www.arms.org.au/staff.asp](http://www.arms.org.au/staff.asp)

In a Moslem society where the will of Allah is supreme and not to be questioned, teary eyes soon disappear out of respect to the will of Allah, but deep down the hurt remains. What our team did needed some basic skills, but it wasn't rocket science. What God had asked us to do was to demonstrate kindness in action. The response to this kindness by the victims of the tsunami was amazing. One victim who had lost all of his family told me that our presence had given them hope to continue on. A refugee camp leader hugged our medical team as we entered the remote camp in which he lived because they had nothing and had given up hope of being found by the aid agencies. As one of our



By Sirisak Pituck

## A Hope Glimmers

Have you had a meaningful Christmas this year? This is how Partners, ARMS and most of all the supporters made Christmas meaningful to the Karen children at the Mae-La refugee camp. Together we raised over \$3,200 which enabled Partners to set up Christmas celebrations in three different locations. Here is the story from one of the locations...

*Hundreds of Children gathered excitedly in one of the Karen leader's home. It was a wonderful opportunity for our staff to be able to share with all of these children in one place, and it may be that the staff were more excited than the children.*

*It wasn't a long wait before the children were immersed in a variety activities made available for the presentation. Wide-eyed and ready, the children where off like horses at the tracks, moving from one game or contest to another with piñata bashing (handmade by the Partners workers), food, candy and ice cream to fill the space between. For a people who exist mainly on a diet of rice, vegetables, fish paste, and perhaps a small*

*portion of other meat, it was as much a treat for the volunteers as it was for the children many of whom had never even tasted ice cream before.*

*In a refugee camp, a place of need where people often lose purpose for their lives, a Christmas celebration brought joy to hundreds of people, if only for a moment. But these moments are seeds of hope that will grow, and they make the true meaning of Christmas more real to everyone. Because of dedicated staff and those who faithfully support them, seeds where planted this Christmas among the Karen People of the Mae La Refugee Camp.*

Thank you for your generosity. It has enabled us to make a dramatic difference to thousands of suffering people and in many cases has saved lives. Your help has been the fuel behind our work to people who need to know there is still hope. We appreciate your partnership in reaching out to needy in the Karen refugee camps.

# Back from the Border

By Robin Wales



Recently our dear friend Robin Wales as in Burma teaching Microscopy to Karen Primary Healthcare workers. We thought this reflection from Robin would be of interest to our readers.

*During my time in Burma I made two visits to clinics requiring long walks up a bit of hill climbing and negotiating narrow ridges between rice fields overgrown with high grass. By necessity we drove on side roads and narrow tracks to avoid the Thai border guards. The first Burmese clinic we went to we were transported there by long-shaft boat across the river, however, this boat wasn't available to get back so they re-floated a previously submerged boat being hidden from the Burmese military for us to paddle back in. The other clinic was further upstream and we crossed the river via a bamboo bridge. These were both places where students use our donated microscopes, it was good to see the conditions they work under and give some guidance. There was also time to visit the orphanage we support. Jonathan's house, wife and new baby, other friends and an unsupported child care centre for disabled children, all in the refugee camp. Next year I hope to spend a week doing more of this after teaching in Thailand. Finally, I spent the remaining time with Partners teaching about malaria to primary healthcare workers.*





# RESCUENET IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Mark Cockburn

Some of our readers will be aware that in early December a series of typhoons ripped through parts of the Philippines. Hundreds were killed by both the typhoons and the mudslides that followed. Many thousands of families lost their homes. RescueNet was there. Mark Cockburn filed this report.

*On arriving in Manila, we immediately began the task of registering with government authorities. After an entire day of phone calls with people saying 'Thank you so much for coming - we really need you. Please ring this person.' and you ring that person and they say 'Thank you but the army has it under control.', we were feeling very frustrated and the next morning we prayed and the Lord told each of us that all was in hand.*

*We went down for breakfast at the YWAM base and a little Filipino YWAM woman came and asked me if we had any success. After saying*

*'No', she passed me a card and said 'The pastor at my church mentioned something last week about doing something, and I was wondering if you could give him a call.'*

*'When can you get here?' was the Pastor's response, 'We've got a coach leaving in an hour for the hardest hit area.' Little did we know, but the church had teamed up with none other than Operation Blessing (OB) - our old friends from Iraq, and together the church and OB had jointly put a response together to help the typhoon victims.*

**“Many thousands of families lost their homes. RescueNet was there. Mark Cockburn filed this report.”**

*The coach took us to an Army camp where we stayed overnight and the next day we were flown into the devastated area by army choppers.*



A little boy has his wounds attended by Mark .



Much needed supplies are unloaded for the victims of the mudslide.

**“The people had nowhere to go 4-5 metre waves battering the coastline.”**

*The scenes will forever be in my mind - like Australia's eastern seaboard, there is a range of very high mountains spanning much of the east coast but unlike Australia, these mountains are within a kilometre or two of the coast. These people up and down the coast had etched out a living mainly off the sea and tourism whilst illegal loggers had their spoils etched out in the mountains...enter 19 typhoons and then 4 super typhoons!!*

*The people had nowhere to go 4-5 metre waves battering the coastline and the illegal spoils crashing down the mountainsides along with the rocks, boulders, trees, vegetation, and so on.*

*We were privileged to be a part of an initiative that medically attended to, fed, clothed and supplied 5 days of supplies to (in one area alone) 650 people on the first evening; 850 the following morning and well into uncountable numbers after that.*

*Every team member came away with many stories to tell about what they had seen or heard - for me the privilege of a lifetime arrived when one woman and her daughter came to me in the clinic with the flu and various aches and pains. She said to me in broken English 'My husband is a fisherman - but there are no fish.' It was her way of saying that they had no money to pay for the services we offered. It was my great honour and privilege to see the change on her face when I told her that it was all for free!!"*



**It is a great pleasure for us to announce that ARMS is reopening its Sunshine Coast office. The work will be headed up by Nerilee Sowter and is beginning its first project in an orphanage in Lombok, Indonesia. In the article below Nerilee talks about this project.**

*In Lombok there are many children who have no family, who don't go to school and who have no access to health care or proper nutrition. Recently I had the privilege of staying in an orphanage that is really making a difference.*

*The Griya Shekinah Orphanage is a small orphanage that has 16 children directly under its care. There are many more children who need to be cared for but, due to lack of space and finances, the orphanage is unable to help them. It is a sad situation. Besides caring for the children in its care the orphanage also runs a community health outreach program. Workers from the orphanage also travel to remote*

**“ beginning its first project in an orphanage in Lombok, Indonesia.”**

*villages in the region and provide health education and care for families in these communities.*

*Lia is one of the leaders at Griya Shekinah and hopes that one day her orphanage will have enough resources to be able to care for up to 100 children, but finances are a problem. Indonesian's monetary crisis and political situation affect the everyday life of the country's 140 million citizens. This translates into low literacy rates and low living standards. The focus of the orphanage's vision is to help orphaned children to have a good standard of education and a reasonable standard of living.*

*Close to the orphanage are two unused blocks of land for sale: one is just next to the existing property while the other is on the same street and big enough for a small playing field. The orphanage wants to buy these blocks of land so that it can increase the number of children who it can care for.*

*ARMS Sunshine Coast is working with the leadership of Griya Shekinah to make their ministry goals become a reality. Our team is working to raise money for this project and to send teams to help with teaching English to the children and to support the health care project in the village.*

# Save a life..

By Child Sponsorship Program



Greetings to you. My name is Aungkana Chanteum. I study in the secondary school. Last week, I went to Chang Island, it was very fun. We had to use the ferry boat, it is very big boat and up stair is for the people. While the boat was sailing, I saw lots of fish and jellyfishes. Around one hour, we reached the shore then we traveled by truck to find the place to rest. I went swimming too. It is a very beautiful place and quiet. I woke up early and saw the sun rose.

I thank you very much for your kind support on my education, I will try my best to learn and do the exam. Wishing you to have lots of happiness.

## ...Sponsor a child

### Focus On Mercy

is the newsletter of the National Office of Australian Relief & Mercy Services Ltd.  
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A Ministry Of Youth With  
A Mission Australia

## Quotable Quote

Hold everything in your hands light, otherwise it hurts when God pries your fingers open.

Corrie Ten Boon

### Tax Deductible Projects

1. Burmese IDP Project
2. Hekan Housing Project
3. Home Of The Open Heart
4. Karen Preschool Project
5. Weberek Water Project
6. Reverse The Curse Of Landmine Project
7. Tsunami Appeal

## Response Form



I would like to become a supporter of ARMS and will regularly pray for its ministry and /or give a monthly gift of \$ ..... per month. I enclose a gift of \$ ..... towards:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Office Support | <input type="checkbox"/> ARMS Sunshine Coast | <input type="checkbox"/> Australian Mercy Fund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rescue Net              | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Sponsorship   | <input type="checkbox"/> Karen Refugees        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tsunami Appeal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....          |  |

Name.....  
Address.....  
.....Post Code .....  
Contact Number .....

Please debit my credit card (circle one) Visa Mastercard Bankcard

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Expiry date ...../..... Signature .....