

RENEW

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Returning land to life, fifty years after the war

Twenty-five years of the RENEW model in Quảng Trị Province, Vietnam

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The war in Vietnam

About 3 million

Vietnamese people killed, about 2 million of them civilians

About 3 million

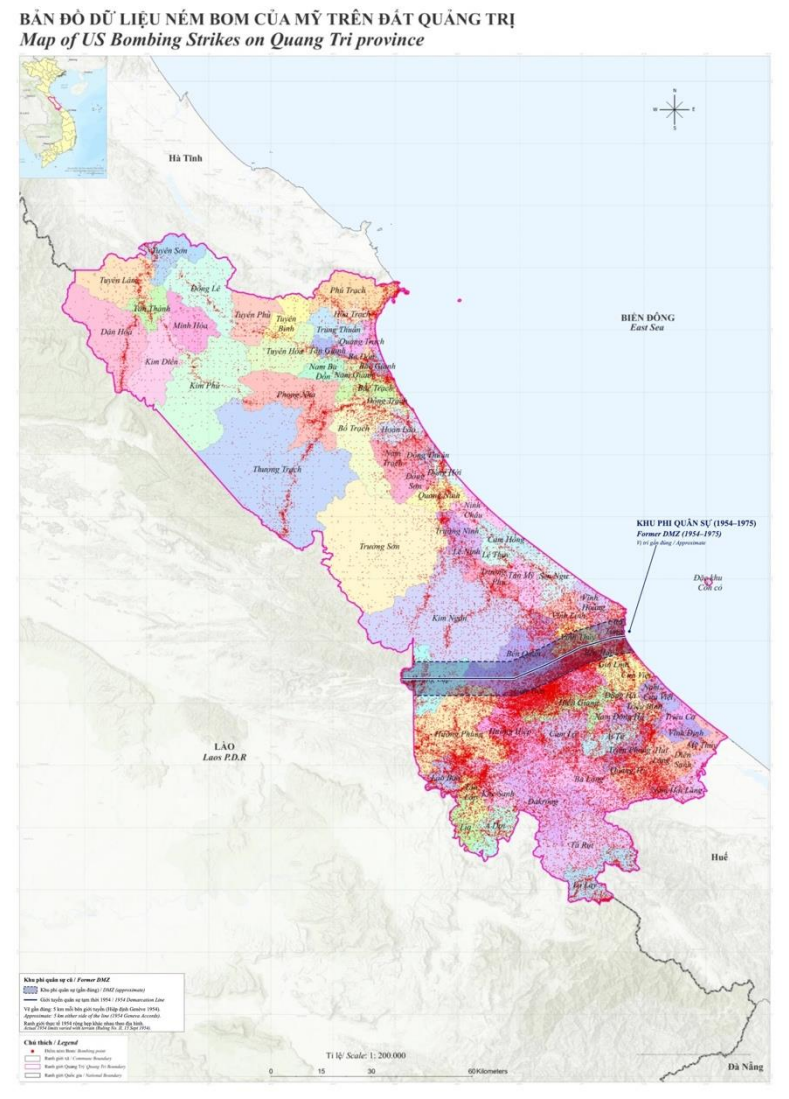
people living with health effects and disabilities linked to Agent Orange/dioxin, of an estimated 4.8 million exposed

Over 7.5 million tons

of bombs dropped on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, 1965-1975: double the total of World War II

Sources: [confirm before Prague]

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QUẢNG TRỊ PROVINCE

On the front line, at the 17th parallel

From 1954 to 1975 the demarcation line divided Vietnam here. Every red dot on this map is a recorded US bombing strike.

The most bombed province in Vietnam, carpet-bombed by B-52s and fought over on the ground

Only 11 of 3,500 villages were left unbombed by the end of the war

9th of 58 provinces for herbicides sprayed, including Agent Orange, 1961-1971

Source: Friends of Project RENEW (renewvn.org)

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Two legacies that never left



Unexploded ordnance

Cluster bomblets, artillery shells, mortars and large bombs, still in the ground across the province.



Agent Orange / dioxin

Herbicides sprayed during the war. Families in Quảng Trị still care for children, now grown, with severe disabilities associated with dioxin. Quang Tri has 30,000 people exposed by dioxin, 16,000 still alive.

1975 TO 2000

316

UXO accidents a year in Quảng Trị, on average, for twenty-five years after the war.

Farmers, children, scrap collectors: people doing ordinary work on their own land.

WHY RENEW WAS BORN

An idea from Quảng Trị itself

In the late 1990s, foreign help went mostly to technical clearance. Risk education and help for victims received little.

The province asked for one integrated program: clearance, education and care for victims together. With American veterans of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, RENEW began in Đông Hà on 15 August 2001.



RENEW co-founders Hoàng Nam and Chuck Searcy

What makes RENEW different

Integrated

Risk education, victim assistance and clearance in one program, not three separate projects.

Vietnamese-led

Directed, managed and staffed by Vietnamese. Foreign partners bring training and resources.

Locally owned

Skills, equipment and data stay in Quảng Trị. Partners have changed; the work has never stopped.

“Former enemies, working side by side to repair what the war left behind.”

One chain, three links

1 · Since 2001

Risk education

People learn to recognise ordnance, keep away, and report it.

2 · Since 2003

Victim assistance

Victims and people with disabilities rebuild mobility, income and dignity.

3 · Since 2007

Survey and clearance

Teams answer each report, remove the item and clear the land.

Each link strengthens the others: survivors are often the most convincing voices in risk education.

RENEW Center: risk education and victim assistance **Project RENEW: survey and clearance** One provincial response

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RISK EDUCATION · RENEW CENTER

Every village becomes the eyes of the teams

- Schools: lessons, safety days, camps
- Teachers and Youth Union as trainers
- A village network to report every find

342,874 people reached since 2001

Hồ Văn Lai lost both legs, an arm and an eye to cluster bombs at the age of ten. Today he teaches children: never touch, always report.

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VICTIM ASSISTANCE · RENEW CENTER

Mobility, income and dignity

- Prosthetic limbs fitted in the villages
- Accessible homes and toilets
- Cattle and other livelihood support
- Care for Agent Orange families

3,149 people with disabilities given mobility support since 2008

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SURVEY AND CLEARANCE

Teams that respond, clear and teach

- Quick response to village reports
- Battle area clearance of farmland
- A safety session after every task

More than 13,950 emergency calls answered by rapid-response teams

Teams tasked by the Quảng Trị Mine Action Center, working to national standards. A cluster munition remnants survey, completed in 2023, defined the remaining work.

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Risk education and victim assistance in the field



Chidren football games built around UXO safety messages



Schoolchildren study inert ordnance on display at the Mine Action Visitor Center



A UXO survivor receives a breeding cow to raise for extra income



A child with severe disabilities receives physical therapy at a daycare center

Survey and clearance in the field



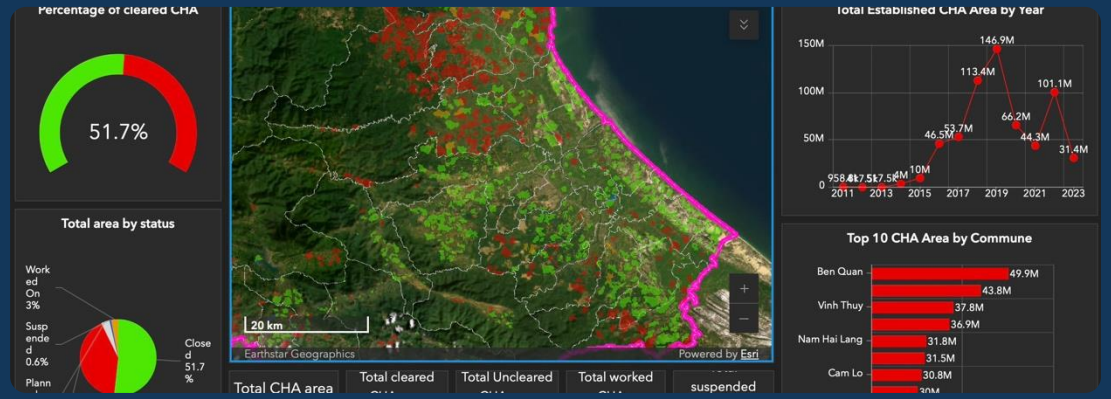
A 500-pound bomb uncovered and measured before removal



An aerial bomb destroyed at the Central Demolition Site



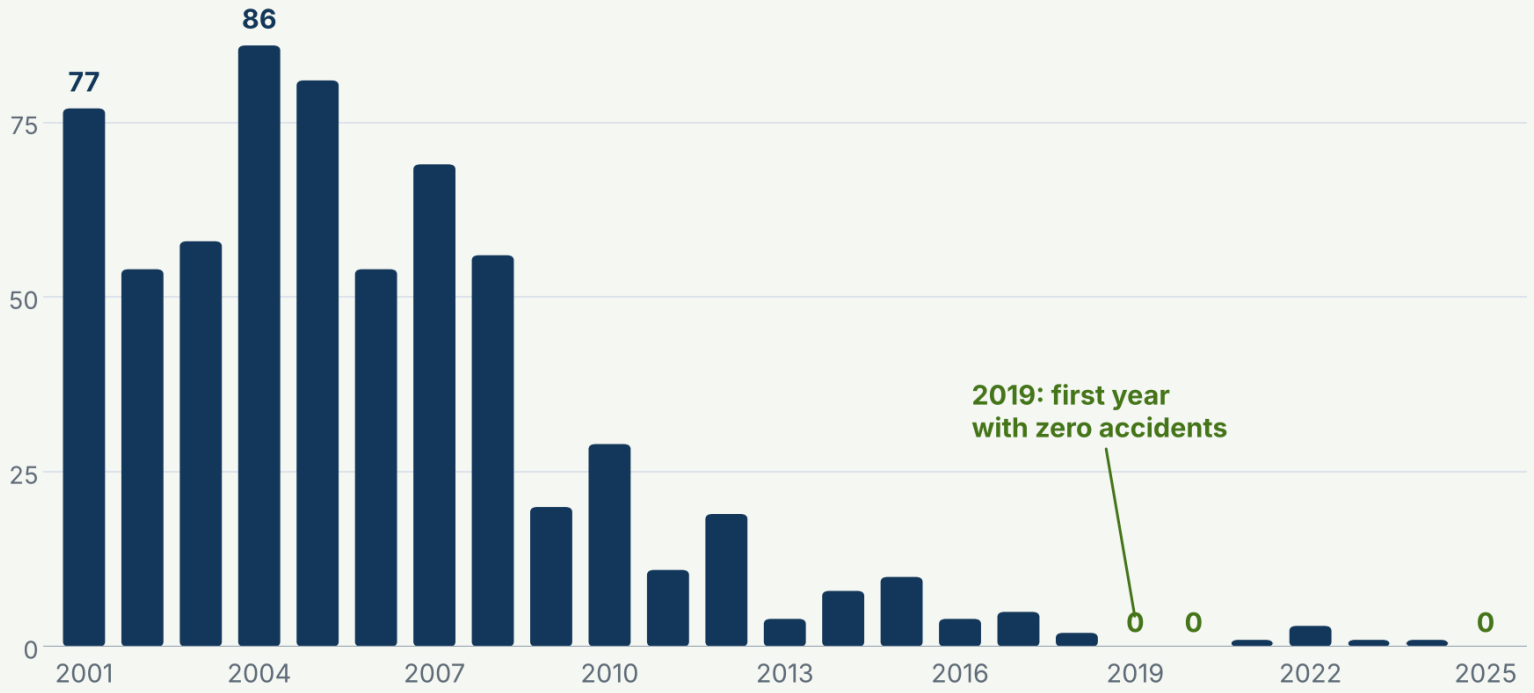
Checking a large loop detector at the test pit before a clearance sweep



Survey: Nearly 52% of 61,947 ha of confirmed hazardous areas in southern Quang Tri cleared and released

UXO ACCIDENTS IN QUẢNG TRỊ, 2001-2025

From dozens a year to almost none



844,000+
explosive items destroyed

417 million
square metres of land returned to communities

Results of all mine action organisations in Quảng Trị working together, since 2001. Accident data: [source]

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The work is not finished

A larger province

Since 2025, Quảng Trị includes former Quảng Bình, with border areas along the old Hồ Chí Minh Trail.

Risk remains

Between 2022 and 2024, six residents aged 15 to 50 were victims of UXO accidents. Four were killed.

Land still to survey

In the enlarged province, the cluster munition survey is to be completed by 2030.

Support is changing

Aid moves to newer crises, and away as Vietnam's income rises. Even a short gap can stop operations and scatter trained teams.



A 15-year-old UXO accident victim in Quang Tri Hospital. He survived and has since finished high school.

RENEW STRATEGY 2026-2030

Three objectives to 2030

1 **Risk education** that leads to every reported item being safely removed

2 **Support for war victims** and people with disabilities across the enlarged province

3 **Multi-task field teams**: quick response, clearance, and risk education at every site

VISION 2035 A UXO-safe Quảng Trị, the province's own goal

BEYOND QUẢNG TRỊ

A model that already travels

1

Quảng Trị

Home base, now joined with Quảng Bình along the old Hồ Chí Minh Trail

2

Quảng Ngãi

Risk education and victim assistance since 2020, with ethnic-minority border communities

3

Huế

The integrated approach shared with the neighbouring province

4

Laos

Support across the border in Savannakhet and Salavan

Vietnamese-managed throughout, with light technical support from international experts.

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FOR UKRAINE AND OTHER WAR-AFFECTED TERRITORIES

What fifty years in Quảng Trị teach us

1. **Start all three together.** Education and care for victims cannot wait for clearance to finish.
2. **Build local capacity from day one.** The people who stay are the ones who finish the job.
3. **Make communities the sensors.** A reporting network finds more ordnance than any survey alone.
4. **Keep one shared record.** Data that every partner uses outlives every project.
5. **Plan for decades, not grant cycles.** The ordnance will outlast the funding.



Thank you

You are welcome in Quảng Trị, to see the work in the field and at the Mine Action Visitor Center in Đông Hà.

landmines.org.vn · renewvn.org