

Guaranteed delivery by federal (police) express

WHEN Mrs Beverley Kay of Crescent Head NSW organised an appeal for school supplies for Cambodian village children she was able to guarantee that all contributions would get safely to the intended destination.

All that was required was convincing the RAAF to fly the cartons 5000km to Cambodia and then getting them on to a vehicle headed into Cambodia's arduous back country. It was that simple.

It is simple when you have the Minister of Defence on your side at this end and the AFP at the other, not to mention an array of Australian Defence Force personnel in between.

The consignment arrived safely and appropriately, the letter of thanks to Mrs Kay from the Director of the Liberated Zone Education Department confirming the safe delivery was dated Christmas Eve.

In his letter Mr Tauch Lun said, "On behalf of the teachers, parents and students in the KPRLF liberated zone, I would like to say thank you to Mrs Kay and to your government that help to support Cambodian students who are in need and I also would like to say thanks to Mr Bill Kirk who co-operated in the distribution of the school material to our students."

The consignment consisted of 19 cartons each packed with 100 writing books, 100 pencils, some coloured pencils and crayons, 6 pencil sharpeners, a few erasers and two or three pairs of children's scissors. A further carton was packed with a complete set of 1990 National Geographic, 50 pens, 60 pencils and other items suited to high school students. The label on each carton read, "A gift from the people on the mid north coast of NSW Australia to the children of Cambodia".



Superintendent Bill Kirk assisting with the distribution of school supplies sent by the community at Crescent Head, NSW.

The cartons arrived in Phnom Penh on 18 November. Staff of the Australian Permanent Mission in Phnom Penh dispatched the cartons to Thmar Puok, care of Superintendent Bill Kirk in two consignments with all cartons arriving safely by early December.

In writing to Mrs Kay, Superintendent Kirk said: "I am writing to personally thank you and the good people of Crescent Head for their very kind donation of school books and material to the children of the Thmar Puok district of Cambodia. The most pleasant duty of presenting the items was left to me and I can assure you that I felt proud to be an Australian representing such kind people from the mid north coast.

"There are 79 primary schools and one secondary school in the area with about 15,000 students. The director of education is Mr Tauch Lun and he has 546 dedicated teachers who are paid 300 Thai Baht a month (about \$17 Australian). It is difficult to describe the poverty in this country,

there are no structures in place, there are no banks, post office or telephones. The roads are all graded dirt, dreadfully dusty in the dry, muddy and impassible in the wet. There is no town water and the people rely on wells and pools of water which will dry up in the coming months. There is no electricity, the heat is oppressive and health care is most basic.

"I am happy to say that the people including the children, although poor, are well nourished and you will see by the photographs the parents take pride in sending children to school clean and neatly attired."

Superintendent Kirk went on to say to Mrs Kay: "I'm sure that the Australian public would be impressed with your enterprise. You have indirectly helped us in our efforts in law enforcement. Our priority since the beginning of our mission in May, 1992 has been to gain the confidence of the people and we have attempted to do that through a number of projects aimed at the children."