



Help 4 Forgotten Allies


includes Projects to Support Refugees from Burma

Charity Registration No **1139273**

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & TRUSTEES REPORT

Year ended

31 December 2023

	<h1>Help 4 Forgotten Allies</h1> <p><i>includes Projects to Support Refugees from Burma</i></p>
	<p>Charity Registration No 1139273</p>

Charity Registration Number:

1139273
(Registered 08 December 2010)

Governing Document:

Trust Deed dated 25 November 2010

Other Names:

The Charity was formerly known as Projects to support Refugees from Burma

Registered Address:

12 Highworth Avenue
CAMBRIDGE
CB4 2BG

Trustees:

Mr Geoff Holt (Chair)
Mrs Sally McLean MBE (Founding Chair)
Mr Andrew Page (Treasurer)
Mr Peter Mitchell (RCEL Representative)
Mr Van Cung Lian
Mr Andrew Curtis
Mr Alex Bescoby
Mr Bertie Lawson
Mrs Bellay South (resigned 12TH April 2024)

President:

General Sir Alex Harley

Patrons:

Dame Joanna Lumley OBE
Karen Archer

Objects:

The object of the charity is to help relieve the suffering of people, including refugees from Burma (Myanmar), who have fled hardship and human rights abuses.

These activities specifically include aid for veterans (and their widows/ dependants) who served in the armed forces raised in Burma during the Second World War.

Website:

www.h4fa.org.uk



ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Help 4 Forgotten Allies (H4FA)

includes Projects to Support Refugees from Burma (PSRB)

Charity No 1139273

PERIOD: 1 January - 31 December 2023

		Comparative 2022
Income (Receipts)	£	
Individual Donations & Gifts (Veterans & Widows)	17635.95	18790
Individual Donations & Gifts (Education & Humanitarian)	4785.89	7758
Reclaimed Tax on Gift Aid	3222.50	1738
RCEL Grant (Note 1)	32328.47	64734
Van Mesdag Fund	18250.00	12000
Cuthbert Horn Trust	7000.00	7000
Tadworth & Walton Overseas Trust	4500.00	4400
Special Forces Benevolent Fund	3000.00	6000
Other Grants (Veterans & Widows)	2000.00	1000
Other Grants (Education & Humanitarian)	2000.00	806
Total Income	94722.81	124226
Expenditure (Payments)		
Grants made to Veterans & Widows (H4FA) (Note 2)	50469.18	90579
Grants for Education & Humanitarian Purposes (PSRB)	53620.88	57846
Admin Costs	2495.16	3025
Total Expenditure	106585.22	151450
Excess/(Deficit) of Income over Expenditure	-11862.41	-27224
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	<i>as at 31/12/2023</i>	<i>as at 01/01/2023</i>
H4FA Account (Cooperative Bank)	154467.46	158577.99
PSRB Account (Cooperative Bank)	16346.15	24098.03
	170813.61	182676.02
	182676.02	
	-11862.41	
	170813.61	


Andrew Page
Trustee & Treasurer

Notes to the Accounts

Note1 The February 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar delayed H4FA's 2021 Grant Distribution programme and due to a change in the RCEL's funding policy from payment in arrears to payment in advance; £24,791 of the RCEL Grant received in 2022 related to 2021.

Note2 Due to the increasing distribution challenges in Myanmar, yearly grant payment comparisons are difficult due to timing. As at 31/12/23, circa £15k of the 2023 grants are unpaid and will be paid in Q1 2024. At the end of 2022, only circa £5k of the 2022 Grants were outstanding and subsequently paid in Q1 2023. Whereas at 31/12/21, approximately £25k of the 2021 Grants were unpaid and actually paid in Q1 2022.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of H4FA

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of H4FA for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of H4FA, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

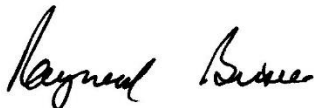
I report in respect of my examination of the accounts of H4FA carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material matter respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of H4FA as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Raymond A Bissex FCA

32 Brooklands Avenue
Waterloo
Liverpool
L22 3XZ

Date: 7 May 2024

Payments to Trustees

No payments (other than approved expenses) were made to Trustees or any persons connected with them during this financial period.

No material transaction took place between the organisation and a Trustee or any person connected with them.

Safeguarding

The Trustees are committed to protecting and safeguarding the welfare of beneficiaries of the Charity, in accordance with established policies and procedures.

GDPR and Data Protection

The Trustees are committed to ensuring that established policies and procedures on GDPR and Data Protection are followed.

Risk Assessment

The Trustees actively review the major risks which the charity faces on a regular basis and believe that maintaining the free reserves stated, combined with the annual review of the controls over key financial systems carried out on an annual basis will provide sufficient resources in the event of adverse conditions. The Trustees have also examined other operational and business risks which they face and confirm that they have established systems to mitigate the significant risks.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have considered the level of reserves they wish to retain, appropriate to the charity's needs. This is based on the charity's size and the level of financial commitments held. The Trustees aim to ensure the charity will be able to continue to fulfil its charitable objectives even if there is a temporary shortfall in income or unexpected expenditure. The Trustees will endeavour not to set aside funds unnecessarily.

Public Benefit

The charity acknowledges its requirement to demonstrate clearly that it must have charitable purposes or aims that are for the public benefit. Details of how the charity has achieved this are provided in the Trustees report. The Trustees confirm that they have paid due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit before deciding what activities the charity should undertake.



Chair of Trustees

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

Our charitable objects are to help relieve the suffering of those who have fled hardship and human rights abuses, including refugees from Burma/Myanmar. These activities specifically include aid for needy veterans, their widows and dependents, who served so faithfully in the armed forces raised in Burma during the Second World War. Sadly, they have often not received the proper recognition they deserve. During the year, with the help of local partners and despite increasingly challenging and often dangerous situations on the ground, we have continued to distribute grants, many of whom live in remote locations.

The trustees have agreed that the future strategic direction of the charity will be to focus increasingly on educational and humanitarian projects, seeking to provide a longer-term legacy for these people who have suffered so much. You can read more about these exciting developments elsewhere in this report, in particular the night school for Chin refugee children at Zokhawthar in Mizoram state, India.

We remain immensely grateful to all our supporters and donors, both individuals and grant-making bodies, without whom none of this would be possible. As we look forward, we believe there is a strong and much needed future for the charity.

The Myanmar Army Junta have continued to unleash indiscriminate acts of terror and violence on many of Myanmar's people. This is done to terrorise and cower the population. There has continued to be sustained use of air power with arbitrary attacks on housing, schools, hospitals, places of religious worship and community centres: anywhere where the Junta suspects people are gathered regardless of whether they have any association with the widespread anti junta organisations. The regime is heavily supported both politically, and with materiel, from outside of Myanmar. There remains a very limited awareness of the dire situation in Myanmar/Burma in the wider world, which continues to be very focused on the war in Ukraine and other strategic international crises, especially in the Middle East.

The economy of Myanmar continues to be devastated and the health and educational system is severely damaged and has in many areas collapsed. This pivotal South-East Asian country has in effect, tragically, become a failed state. It is unfortunate that neighbouring countries have not been able to help Myanmar become a democratically accountable state. PSRB/H4FA's vital work on the ground with refugees on the Myanmar/Thai and Indian borders, IDPs within the country and, most especially, our educational projects are all crucial.

The UK's historic responsibilities in Myanmar/Burma, particularly the massive efforts Great Britain and our vital Commonwealth allies made to defeat the Japanese invasion of Burma in WWII, remains woefully unknown. The devastating position daily facing the people of Myanmar is not understood in the UK. This is deeply regrettable.

Our colleagues and volunteers on the ground deliver help direct to IDPs and refugees, our remaining old veterans and their widows. This is in addition to our extensive and crucially important educational projects for children and young people in the refugee camps. They carry out this vital work often under dangerous and risky conditions. There are significant and unavoidable risks to their safety. Without their courage, perseverance and sustained fortitude none of this would be possible.

Despite significant challenges, grants have been delivered to ex-servicemen or their widows over the last 12 months.

Our income for 2023 was £94,723 and expenditure totalled £106,585. This level of expenditure continues to be facilitated by the exceptional level of donations seen in 2021. Of our expenditure, 47.4% was spent on WWII veterans and widows and the cost of getting their grants to them, within Burma/Myanmar and in the camps; 42% on education and humanitarian relief; 8.3% on adult Christian education; and 2.3% on essential administration, publicity and fundraising. At our 2023 trustees' meeting, it was decided that, unless a preference is indicated, all future undesignated donations would be split, with 50% going to H4FA and 50% to PSRB (educational and humanitarian) projects.

Our lists of veterans and widows become shorter as inevitably these now very old people pass away. They themselves have asked that any extra funds be dedicated to the education of their people. In 2022, we began a new educational project among the Chin refugees in Mizoram State in India and provided partial funding for a new school in Karen State. We continue to support both schools.

As of April 2024, 26 veterans and 120 widows remain – a total of 146.

Special thanks must go to H4FA's donors in 2023, among them: The Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League, Special Forces Benevolent Fund, Van Mesdag Trust, Cuthbert Horn Trust, Holy Trinity Brussels, Roi Baudoin Foundation, Tadworth and Walton Overseas Trust, Gavin Wigginton in memory of his father Sydney Wigginton SOE, and many generous individuals in the UK, Germany and Belgium.

Educational and Humanitarian Projects (PSRB)

Emmanuel School

Emmanuel School is PSRB's largest project. Thanks in large part to the generosity of the Van Mesdag Trust we have been able to support them this year with the above amount; we are their sole donor. A magnanimous annual gift from the Tadworth and Walton Overseas Aid Trust provides lunch every school day for all the 236 students. This for many of the children is their main meal of the day. Gifts from many other donors make up the total amount.

50 new children had arrived at the school by March 23. Fleeing with their families the civil war raging in their homelands across the border in Karen State refugees arrive traumatised and desperate. Emmanuel School becomes for the children a place of safety and peace where they can thrive and learn.

This year Gloria, who has been the headmistress for over twelve years is being resettled with her family in the US. We are so grateful to Gloria for the wonderful work she has done and the excellent reports she has provided us with every quarter without fail. While she has been headmistress at the school she has opened up new avenues of learning for the children particularly in art and craft work and in cultivation. We are proud that students from Emmanuel School came top in exams throughout the camp (population 34,000). The school is very well organised with a committee and parent teacher organisation. It comes under the Anglican church. A new head teacher has now been appointed.

Mizoram Project – PSRB Night School

We are continuing our education project in Zokhawthar refugee camp which is located at Burma/India border. We started this project in May 2022 with 60 students and provide supplementary education to the refugee children from Burma (mostly Chin ethnic). They learn English, Burmese and Maths.

In addition, they learn about Chin culture and language from and then play sports, take part in creative pursuits. The student numbers grew to 160 in the 2023 academic year. The new academic year started in April 2024 and we currently have 250 students. The increase in the student number is a result of the good reputation of the project, and also sadly as refugee numbers are increasing due to the on-going conflict.

Mizoram Project – Phoenix School

Due to the increase numbers of refugees within the area, a new refugee camp was established 2km away from Zokhawthar refugee camp. Over 300 families are currently camping at this camp. Children in this newly established camp do not have access to education, especially the primary age children. They spent most of their time at rubbish pits and salvage what they can find. There is a need and demand to provide education to those children. H4FA has built a new school at this camp early this year and the school was ready for April which is the start of Indian academic year.

We currently providing education to 80 students at Phoenix school. The district education department has informally recognized the existence of Phoenix school and they will be able to join the middle school when they graduate.

It is vital that these children, who have had to endure the most traumatizing of circumstances, are able to continue their education. It is expected that this undertaking, along with our other humanitarian projects, becomes an increasing focus for our work over the next few years.

Bible College

We have supported this small Bible College in Ban Mae Surin refugee camp since its inception in 2001 and stood with it through some dark times, such as when it completely burnt to the ground and had to be rebuilt. A few hours drive from Mae Hong Son, in the jungle and close to the border, it is very remote and the internet connection very poor, but despite this one of our trustees has visited many times and this year was there for their Graduation ceremony.

Most of the money we give the Bible College goes on paying their academic staff, but is also used to supplement camp rations, and pay for the diesel to fuel their generator which provides light at night to study. The students grow a lot of vegetables.

Many graduates from the Bible College have courageously gone back into Karenni State to work in the Churches there, though currently sadly many of these Churches lie in ruins. The bombing of civilian structures there has been well documented and includes many Churches, schools as well as hospitals and pagodas.

The Bible College has taken in 40 orphans fleeing the fighting. These children live in the Bible College compound under their watchful eye and go to camp schools. PSRB gives some funds for their clothing and food.

Care Villa

There are nine residents here, all of whom except one have suffered landmine injuries, mostly sustained as Karen soldiers while trying unsuccessfully to defuse a mine. The ninth is a boy of 12 who is blind. Their food from camp rations is inadequate and extra food is bought for them because of their health. Each year Care Villa holds a Thanksgiving and Christmas celebration for around 120 people within the Camp. This is organised by the large Bible College nearby which oversees their welfare. The money sent pays for some food, two carers, medicines, extra hygiene products and music, current affairs discussions and English lessons.

IDP Teacher's Project

Our distributor for this project is a prominent member of the Free Burma Rangers; he has worked with us since the nineties. He takes small individual grants, often travelling on foot through the jungle, to teachers in remote areas of Karenni State. The teachers work in schools that were set up to cater for the children of villagers who have fled Burma Army incursions. The bombing of civilians has been worst in Karenni State. Figures show that 60,000 civilian structures have been destroyed by these bombings nationwide, and two and a half million people are living as IDPs and have had to flee their homes in Myanmar/Burma currently.

Other Projects

We continue to send funds through various organisations on the Thai Burma border as humanitarian relief to IDPs. This aid is designed to buy food and tarpaulins to help civilians in the extreme situations they find themselves in fleeing their homes and the bombing of the Burma Army.

We support a Maternity Bags project begun two years ago to provide young mothers on the run from the fighting in Karen and Karenni State during the civil war with clothes and goods needed for childbirth and for caring for themselves and a new born baby. PSRB is contributing to the project organised by a group in Chaing Mae Thailand.

We also support a school in Karen State but details remain confidential due to the civil war and need to protect the people there.