



## **CONVOY 34 ARGENTINA REPORT**

Our mission was based at Villa General Guemes, Formosa, and Argentina. But will be visiting other areas around the region assisting with training and forming other brigades in the Region. We were tasked with Training on various appliances Inc 1x IFRA donated Ambulance and 1 x IFRA donated Dodge Fire appliance and repair of Godiva pump and transmission on the Dodge appliance. We are also going to be training on British and foreign equipment.

Convoy Commander– David Kay (Fife Fire and Rescue Service)  
IFRA Tech Services Manager- Gordon Stewart (Fife Council Tech Services)

### **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> February**

Our leaving date 18<sup>th</sup> Feb and arriving in Asuncion on the 19<sup>th</sup> arrives and we head off to Edinburgh airport put our bags in and head off to London, when we arrive in Heathrow we head off to the terminal we are leaving from to be told “That was quick the alarm just went off.” The only time I am ever first in the q and this happens. We had a chuckle and then once the BAA boys give us the all clear head off to the plane. Once settled in we are delayed 20 min then an air steward walks up and asks if the man next to me was Gordon Stewart. I say yes he then says into his radio “Yeah he is here you can take off.” THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL SO FAR.

### **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> February**

Spent the day in Sao Paulo airport as the plane is not for 8 hours, once we are on the plane to Asuncion we arrive in a rain storm. Once we collect the bags we are collected by our ever present Peter Logan and taken to the apartment to get some rest.

### **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> February**

Up at 0830hrs today although this is our day off and everything is closed and not going to the border till tomorrow morning. Spent today sorting out equipment to kit to take to Argentina. Also discuss with Gordon a plan for the repairs on the Dodge appliance etc.

### **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February**

Up at 0730hrs for breakfast then off to the border which is about 2 hour’s away. We go through the checks and get handed over to Ricardo. After another 3 hours drive we arrive in Guemes and went straight to the station. The appliance is there and Gordon sets about looking her over. I get the Bomberos on duty to empty the appliance and get them storing the equipment.







## Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February

Today 0830hrs RTC Exercise with 2 cars – one on its side and one on all four wheels (if it had any). The Firefighters did really well and conducted the scenarios well. The first scenario took 28 min which is really good time. We then spent an hour cutting the vehicle up using different techniques such as Dashboard Roll, B post rip etc. 2<sup>nd</sup> car was a straightforward roof flap sideways finishing in 23 min. Afternoon we did some work on the Dodge in preparation for getting the parts tomorrow I HOPE. 1045hrs went to bed.



## Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February

Lie in till 0800hrs then go for coffee then had a meeting with the Firefighters from Belgrano till 1130hrs. Then started to put blue lights on the 2 police motorcycles which are the only vehicles they have since the police van broke down. 1240hrs finished 1 motorcycle then had lunch with the Bomberos in Guemes station a sort of farewell BBQ. 1440 went back to police station to do the other motorcycle. 1730hrs we are finished and waiting on the parts arriving from Clorinda for the Dodge. We need to work all night if they turn up. 1930hrs finished preparing everything on the Dodge still waiting on parts looks like they are not coming. 2300hrs still no parts we are told they will be here in the morning. NOT HOPEFULL.



## Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> February

0800hrs up to find no parts we have breakfast then head up to the fire station to meet some firefighters and go over some equipment that they have in stores. Afternoon we pack and it is raining so hard I am told we are being collected in a tractor. NO KIDDIN we are collected on the back of a tractor taken to the community centre through 2 foot of mud where we meet Ricardo who is going to be driving us back to the border. After his car is towed out of a ditch.

Our mission was not entirely successful in that we did not complete repairs to the appliance but the local mechanics can now just fit the new parts and it should be ok. I had loads of meeting to smooth the way for our next mission in Nov this year and we had some good training sessions. Gordon's report on his activities is added below this report so you can see what he was up to.



David Kay  
IFRA  
Director/Chairman

### **CONVOY 34 ARGENTINA TECHNICAL SERVICES REPORT**

Uneventful trip to London H/row, if you discount missing lunch, no I mean missing the hotel for lunch, I took the wrong road, ended up in McDonalds instead of the Hotel we were going to have lunch in.

We arrived at the gate at h/row to be told we were quick???. The fire alarm had just gone off they thought we were H/Row fire service. (*No we are not the works fire service*)

Rough trip down to Sao Paulo. There are fewer potholes on the A92.

8hr wait for connecting flight in the most boring terminal in the world.

**Sunday**, Day of rest and not as hot as I expected. Up for early start Monday. 5hr trip down to Argentina.

**Monday** down to the border checked through into Argentina had to get the border people to push start our transport (now known as the. "Ricardo Mobile")

Arrived at Villa General Guemes safely and had a look at the station the kit and the appliance looks like a lot of work, early start tomorrow.

**Tuesday** Spent most of the day looking for somewhere to work on the vehicle, thought they would have sorted this out, and then I had to remove ladder gantry's to get the appliance in the workshop and fabricating a ramp from planks and different size tree trunks

(Check the photo if you don't believe it).



Checked out transfer box all bearings appear to be u/s the box must come out. Tools! What tools, after sending a list of the basic needs to do the work virtually no tools, not even a trolley jack a small bottle jack is all they have; fortunately I took some bits and pieces which helped.

Box removed and worst fears confirmed spent the day stripping box down.



**WEDNESDAY** finishing stripping the box today! **Not**, why well because it's a day off at the garage! 2 meetings this morning and 1 last night finished about 11.30pm. Arranged to get into workshop after lunch, managed to get beacons sorted out, Ricardo mucked up the training for Davie. Have to wait on parts for g/box so I am cleaning up the box and gears, getting help from the people at the workshop. Health and Safety **I don't think so**, I am not sure what the fluid was but it was sprayed at high pressure and NO safety equipment was used.



**THURSDAY** Parts for g/box today, **NOT!** Managed to sort out beacons, went for lunch, came back to w/shop no one there, siesta 12.30-16.00 Tidy up cab and moved flasher on front of cab, one of the blue flashers went missing in transit so I moved the remaining one to the middle.

**FRIDAY** discovered that I had two red flashers so I fitted them to the front they have plenty flashers on the front now. no g/box parts yet Davie going **MENTAL** think it may be sorted out now but it may be Monday for parts, cant check pump but from what I can see the only problem with the pump is the primer so that was sorted out ('o no I was driving a scooter today')



**SATURDAY** went to a place called Tigre for a meeting. The place had been devastated by a tornado but was being rebuilt though slowly we were invited to the festival that night but it was a 4hr round trip so we didn't go  
**SUNDAY** again hopeful that parts arrive. Early start 08.00 for RTC training till 12.30 how Davie survived full kit for RTC training beats me I was melting just taking pictures and helping out, did a bit tidy up on the appliance in the afternoon. I Hope parts for the gearbox arrive tomorrow, early night just in case!  
**MONDAY** no the parts didn't arrive!!! Fitted blue lights to the police motorcycles. Sorted out some rusty holes and the transit damage on the appliance. Still no parts so I helped Davie with some more training.



**TUESDAY STILL NO PARTS**, and no guarantees as to when they would arrive, briefed the "Mechanic" that helped me remove and strip the box as to how to rebuild it if the parts ever arrived, **GET ME OUT OF HERE!** lunch then back to the hotel for our kit OMG its Raining again, collected from the hotel in or should I say on a TRACTOR picture this, there should have been a photograph, I had one foot on the tow hitch the other foot dangling in no mans land holding my two bags on top of the tractor wing trying not to fall off and trying to dodge the mud flying everywhere from the tyres, Davie standing on the only step on the tractor (about the size of an A4 piece of paper) in front of the tyre holding his bags in the bonnet in very heavy rain mud flying everywhere. Then the tractor was used to remove the car from the mud that it was stuck in, it might not have become stuck if there was some tread on the tyres, at last we are on our way back to Paraguay. And the long trip home to look forward to.  
 Since returning to Scotland I have been told that the parts eventually arrived and have been fitted to box, the appliance is now on the run and working well as you can see in the photo above right. Not entirely an un-successful trip as I believe repairs would not have been carried out at all if we had not removed the gearbox and stripped it ready for the new bearings.

Gordon T Stewart  
 IFRA  
 Technical services Manager

