

### IFRA - BOSNIA (BOSANKI PETROVAC) TRIP AUGUST 2003

Personnel	-	David Sharp ( Fife Fire & Rescue Service)
	-	Bob Rearie ( Fife Fire & Rescue Service)
	-	Bob Kennedy ( Fife Fire & Rescue Service)
	-	Brian West (Mines Rescue)
Equipment	-	1 x Dennis Fire Appliance
	-	1 x TATA (Indian) 4x4 rescue vehicle
	-	Assorted Fire & Rescue Equipment

#### Wednesday 30 July

Bob Rearie and Dave Sharp are up early to do a recorded message and live interview on Radio Forth.

The guys muster at Rosyth Fire Station at 14.00 hrs along with Brigade Representative D.O Kenny Moran, IFRA press officer T/ADO Graham Hogg and IFRA`s Director Dave Kay for one last check of the vehicles, then head down to the Superfast Ferry Terminal. Some happy snaps were taken of the guys and equipment at the terminal by the Courier, Mirror and Dunfermline Press newspapers along with Graham Hogg.

The guys board the Superfast Ferry park up the vehicles and head up to their cabins. A few minutes later all could be found making their way to the bar for some refreshment and a spot of dinner.

#### Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> July

Arrive in the port of Zeebrugge and the weather is `scorchio`, after speaking with a freight driver on the ferry we have swiftly changed to plan B which is drive through Belgium via Brussels into Luxembourg and then Germany. After a quick stop for fuel we start the long drive, the heat in the front cab of the Dennis is horrendous but bearable with stops. The drive goes well and we arrive in Germany around 18.30hrs with a petrol station services allowing a stop for much needed break and food. After asking the attendant in our best German we find out there is a campsite less than 2 miles away. The vehicles are parked and two tents are pitched, the site showers provide some comfort along with an excellent bar which we made very good use off, all in all a good night was at a cost of only 12.40 Euros all in!!.

#### Friday 1<sup>st</sup> August

We depart campsite at 8.30am and stop for breakfast and fuel close by, then after driving in the wrong direction for a few miles we quickly correct the directions and get going. We then receive a phone call to say that the insurance documents that we require but don't have will be waiting for us at Munchen Airport, this is then changed

to a Fire Station then another Fire Station. Knowing we were held up until the documents arrived we stopped for a toilet break, fortunately the rest stop was at Hockenheim race track and it just so happened that the German Grand Prix warm up was taking place. We enjoyed the racing for an hour then got on our way towards Munchen, as the time was approaching 17.00hrs we decided not to drive into the city and stopped 20km short.

Again landing on our feet as a campsite was very close to the chosen exit from the autobahn. Unfortunately it was full, but a hotel 1/2 a mile away was not and we managed to get a couple of rooms and use of its large beer garden. It was decided that Bob Kennedy and Brian West would share a room as they are both heavy, loud and constant snorers. So after a nice couple of cold Steiners of beer each and some lovely food we settled down for the night.

#### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August

After breaking our fast around 08.30hrs we headed off again into Munchen - looking for Fire Station No. 9, we got directions from the receptionist before departing. Arrived at midday. A fax had been sent to the station chief, but unfortunately was in computer translated German, so the guys had no real idea who or what we required if anything. After several mobile phone calls to 'Mr Fixit' (Dave Kay) we eventually received a fax of the insurance documents. We thanked the guys at the station for their help and Coffee, then set off again towards Salzburg (Austria). Late afternoon driving into central Salzburg, desperate for signs to help us, we ended up turning into a street full of limousines right outside the Royal Opera House just as guests were arriving. After an embarrassing couple of minutes, Bob Rerie got some directions from a friendly local policeman, and with the aide of Dave Sharps eagle eyes we again landed on our feet, finding a gorgeous little camp site run by a lovely English speaking family. After pitching tents, some strange looks and showering we decided to hire a taxi into central Salzburg! Excellent food, couple of glasses of expensive red wine and a seat at a fountain watching an open aired screen of Opera we lazily made our way back to the campsite for the night! All in 44 Euro's.

#### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August

On the trail again early, stopping at the nearest fuel station to catch breakfast before heading towards Slovenian border. No problems at border and we didn't need the insurance documents that we had spent so long trying to get Mr KAY to send to us!! Cracked right on towards Croatian border. No problems with the 4 x 4, but Bob Kennedy and Brian West did get a little caught trying to pay a 5 Euro parking ticket that the border guard said they required!! Going for it we kept on towards Bosnian border, getting there approx. 1730hrs.

Initially there was no one who could help us, eventually a girl working for spedition (civilians employed to help with paperwork) arrived and promptly told us that we would have to wait a couple of hours until Rifit arrived from Bosanski Petrovac with required papers. About midnight Rifit arrived and we got on the road about 1am driving through Bihac towards Bosanski Petrovac. Rifit had a 22 year old translator with him called Demir who was across from London to visit his family.

#### Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August

Arrived in Petrovac after 1am to find that Rifit had arranged for us to be staying in a hotel/guest house ,we were given the whole top floor to ourselves then went straight to bed. After breakfast from the Austrian couple who owned the hotel we met up with

Rifit and Demir then headed back to Bihac to deal with more Border Customs. They wanted more paperwork which was already faxed to them, then they wanted to see the chassis numbers of BOTH vehicles the stamped ones not the plates. To find these we went to Bihac Fire Station where we met the guys and chilled out for a while till they found the numbers and called the customs man (who was drunk). We then went back to the customs base and still had to wait till after 1800hrs before heading back to Petrovac. By this time the Tata exhaust was broken and the blue light had fallen off.....Day wasted.

#### Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> August

We met up with Rifit after breakfast and go up to the Fire station to show the guys the appliances and the equipment on them. The Bosnian Firefighters were very enthusiastic.... Although we were exhausted as the temp was between 35c and 40c. Brian started the lessons off with Breathing apparatus and Resuscitation and at around 5pm Rifit and Demir took us site seeing. Back in Petrovac we had a pizza at a local restaurant (very good).

#### Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> August

We were invited to the Mayors office where we were thanked and given a statuette and a plaque along with certificates. We then returned to the fire station to officialy hand over the appliances. After lunch we packed bags said our goodbyes and departed for Zagreb (200km) as promised in the Mayors car. On arrival at the train station Bob and Brian baby sat the bags while Bob R and myself went in search of a hotel. We opted for the Central Hotel with air conditioning near the train station and city centre and only 45 Euros.

#### Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> August

After breakfast we caught the only train to Graz Austria and arrived approximately midday. A very helpful young lady at the tourist information directed us to an excellent hotel. After a look round the shops, a few beers to relax and a quick siesta we overslept till 10.30pm everybody exhausted.

#### Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August

The final leg of the journey sees us catch the bus to the airport, Graz to Stanstead then on to Edinburgh where a smiling Davie Kay picks us up at the airport.

THE END SO FAR