

CONVOY 8 REPORT

KEVIN REID –FIFE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
TAM MC LUCAS-FIFE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
STEVIE NICOLE-BAA AIRPORT FIRE SERVICE

Thu 17

Meeting at Dunfermline Station at 12-30, Kevin and Tam were chauffeured to Edinburgh Airport by Jim McDonald, meeting up with the third member Steven, we booked our luggage into BMI and headed off to departures, an uneventful flight to Heathrow, transit to terminal 3 was fairly quick, then a 5 hour wait to establish the boarding gate to Sao Paulo. The flight to Sao Paulo was reasonably good and we managed to grab a few hours sleep.

Fri 18

Arrival at Sao Paulo seemed fine until we realised that the BMI girl in Edinburgh had not booked our luggage through to Paraguay, only through to Sao Paulo, Brazil. So we had to go through Customs, collect our luggage, then immigration, a process that took almost 2 and half hours. We then were rushed through check in as our flight was within an hour of take-off and then stand in a queue again to go through immigration, surprisingly though our long stands in the queues in Brazil gave us a passport stamp both in and out of the country on

the same day. It was then off to the gate for the trip to Asuncion. A relatively quick flight and we landed at our destination.

We were met by Peter Logan and a few fire fighters who had travelled to meet us on the “spirit of Fife” an appliance donated by IFRA and Diagio in the past. Peter took Kevin and tam, whilst Steve had the journey in the Spirit of Fife. The driving skills of the residents have not changed much and the need to press your horn every 100 meters seems to still be in force.

Once at the hotel we had 30 minutes to freshen up before being invited to “the Strangers Club, Luncheon”, a club of English speaking business men and ambassadors who meet once a month, we were introduced to a few people then sat at the Ambassador to France’s table. Lunch was welcome after the airport food we had endured since the previous Lunch time.

Tam McLucas shows the award given to Peter Logan

Peter Logan was presented with an award for his involvement with building the Fire Service here in Paraguay by the "Strangers Club".

Our schedule was discussed and is open to change as there seems to be a problem with going north, our details are vague and we shall be given more information in a few days. Maybe a blessing in disguise as the temperature there is very high, only 42 degrees here in the capital today, absolutely sweltering.

The remainder of the day was ours to acclimatise and get an early nights sleep. The travelling had taken its toll and we headed off after dinner for an early night in our hotel rooms. Arranging to meet at breakfast at 9 the following morning.

Sat 19

a walk around the tourist spots in the centre of Asuncion including a visit on their Navy's Museum, whilst we awaited the meeting of the blues finishing, 25 of the 48 blue brigades were discussing the future of their president and how they were going to advance with training and other matters we were not informed about. we were collected and taken to lunch with them and met some of the principal officers we would be visiting over the next 2 weeks, they were trying to arrange our itinerary for the forthcoming week, which seemed to change every

10 minutes, then off to Station called Great Britain , as it was their training day, we watched some of their training taking place, then we gave some input on basic fire fighting techniques, and had a photo shoot for some of the local newspapers, followed by a lot of questions on various fire fighting subjects from the very keen fire fighters. we then returned back to the Hotel for our Evening Meal around 8-30pm. a few refreshments and off to get some sleep , we later found out that we missed a 2 bus crash that happened outside the fire station about 5 minutes after we left, we have not however had any further details on the incident.

Sunday. 20

Picked up from the hotel by taxi and taken the 8km to Lambare, traffic was almost non existent on route so the journey was very quick....

We were introduced to the personnel and at 10 we started our RTA class. Mainly casualty assessment and stabilisation, it was a pity they did not have a car to practise on but they appreciated the input we gave them and our made believe cars worked well. At 12-45 we

stopped for lunch and were taken to the vice presidents house for lunch, there were 3 individual groups having lunch there in different parts of the house. We returned to the station at about 1-45 and chatted with some fire fighters until 2 when we started a BA course.

The Students at Lambare

They seem to be very concerned about carrying casualties and numerous questions arose, mainly around the fact that many of the volunteers are indeed very small themselves, and they wanted to know how to carry the heavy casualties, so much fun was had with the heavier casualties being rescued by the smallest of the group. We had a good session overall and at 5pm we were loaded onto the fire appliance for the trip back to the Hotel.

We awaited Peter coming to give us our tickets for the Trip to the falls on Wed, and the time keeping has maintained that nobody's watches work over here. we then went to find a restaurant for our supper, but for some reason we could not find anywhere open, so it was back to the hotel for dinner there...

Mon 21

An early start for our journey today, alas the Paraguayan clock still bears no resemblance to the UK version and we waited 45 mins until the arrival of our car. we set off at 09-30 and headed to Caacupe where we met the bomberos at the station, we were shown an airline and asked what it was for, so there may be a training need there, although they had no charged cylinders and had 4 different BA manufacturers sets the nearest charging facility is at the Asuncion airport, a long trip indeed. We then went off to a restaurant for lunch and eventually

ended up in our destination at 1pm a place called Carapegua. They have a German fire appliance that was built in 1962 and an old Leyland G145 JFR, we were shown round the station and introduced to the fire fighters, the class subject for the afternoon was BA, and we delivered a lecture on search and rescue and had the class demonstrate these procedures whilst blindfolded. They took to it well, so we then had an exercise in a deserted house filled with smoke for crews to go in and search with their new search procedures, 4 individual exercises took place and all casualties were accounted for. The crews worked hard and were pleased at the chance to wear BA in smoke.

We finished for the day at 5-30 and headed off to have dinner at the same place we had Lunch, then another 30 minute drive off to the

Hotel, we were the only guests there and we retired early for the evening.

Tue 22

A 6am rise and we had our breakfast whilst we awaited the transport, it eventually arrived at 8-15 and by 9-30 we were back in Carapegua, this mornings lecture was given by Tam and was on Hazardous materials and how to decontaminate with the equipment they had, which by UK standards is very limited, although they did have 2 gas tight suits.

We ran an exercise where a willing victim was dusted in flour and the crews had to go in and rescue him and then decontaminate themselves, this is the first training of this sort they had ever had, but the crews did very well and managed to rescue the casualty.

The Students from the Decontamination Training

A discussion was then had on what problems there were, what they did right and a couple of things that had to be reiterated, the response to the exercise was that they really enjoyed it. A quick snack and the lunch time session started, this was on stabilisation of a vehicle and casualty care. Unfortunately there were no cars available to do live

training on with tools, so we made do with sketches on the blackboard for cars in various different positions and then had 2 practical sessions on a car on all four wheels which belonged to a fire fighter. The casualty handling aspect also taught them how they must quickly establish if the casualty is breathing before the stabilisation is done, as normally they would have checked the casualty too late, so if their was a compromised airway all their efforts until then would have been in vain. The station celebrates their 6th anniversary in July and the fire fighters are extremely proud and worked well over the two days. We then had our journey back to Asuncion which took a little over 2 and a half hours, just enough time for us to have a shower and some food before we catch the midnight bus to our next destination.

Wed 23

Trip to the largest hydroelectric dam in the world on the border of Brazil and Paraguay

With our tour guide at the dam

Steve at one of the 20 turbines

A view of the dam

Iguaçu Waterfalls in Brazil

Thurs -24

Afternoon, 4 hour lesson on BA, course held in a local school. Good class, lots of questions and practical.

It could be said that Kevin did enjoy talking a bit too much. But back to the hotel for a good 3 course meal.

Fri -25

Hazmat training at the Great Britain station proved to be successful, even after we had to let them know that they were wearing the suits inside out. The casualty did not mind too much the soaking we gave him either.

A quick bite to eat then we started on the RTA training, this actually finished shorter than expected as there was a real car crash not 500 yards from the station, however the yellows had been called first from 3km away so the blues just got to stand and watch, a surreal experience as if they couldn't help them if they really wanted too. Luckily no one was injured and we headed back to the station to finish the class.

Sat. 26

Picked up by Erik and Gustav at 8am for a tour, and by 2pm we had travelled for 5 hours in the car with a little bit of leg stretching at several locations including a lake and a picturesque hill. We relaxed in the afternoon and after our first pizza of the trip we were off to the Britannia bar for a few drinks with Gustavo then on to a few Paraguayan watering holes before getting in at 4am, a good time had by all but the long day took its toll on us and we were very tired.

Sun -27

A complete day off to rest as we supported a Paraguayan Hangover, and the fire crews were waiting to watch the world cup qualifier against Ecuador which they happened to lose 5-2 after being 2 nil up too.... An early night as we were to be up early for the trip south in the morning.

Mon 28

–Up for 7-30 pick up, and put on the bus to Encarnacion, the bus left at 8-30 and at 11-30 it stopped once for us to stretch our legs, back on the bus and at 2-45 we arrived at Encarnacion. A 20 minute

minibus ride to see the station at Capitan Miranda then off to Hotel Tyrol and by 5pm we managed to get into our hotel room. Showered and changed we met at 6 by the president of Capitan Miranda and introduced to our Ukrainian, Spanish to English translator. We were then given a barbecue in the hotel as the owners son wanted one. Then it was off to the station to meet the principle officers we were invited to sit in on their weekly meeting at 7pm, by 9pm we had to excuse ourselves as we could not follow what was happening due to no translation being provided and as it happens they were discussing for 45 minutes whether to take collecting tins to a football match or not!!!

Tue29

Up for breakfast and out side the hotel at 7-45 and at Capitan Miranda for 8am. As before Paraguay time took its toll and by 9am there were only 5 students, so they decided to take us on a tour of the town first, a 100 yard walk showed us the municipal building and a 5-aside football pitch. So back at the station for 9-30 we had managed to get up to 5 students. We decided to start with RTA and casualty care, comments from the commandant said they were excellent at stabilisation so we put them to the test with 1 casualty in a vehicle on 4 wheels, they used one step chock that performed no stabilisation what so ever and their casualty care would have probably resulted in further injuries to the casualty. We started from the basics and explained the procedures for stabilisation, then on to the contact with the casualty, and how to assess the possible injuries they may have. We then went on to a few extrication techniques to remove casualties through the door as they tend not to cut vehicles here as they use every part as spares.

A stop for lunch then the class were taught basic search procedures, casualty carrying and how to traverse a room diagonally at 3 pm we were driven 45 km to Fram to see where the newest fire corp. will be starting, all they have at the moment is a water bowser and they use a tractor to pull it and to operate the pump.

The Fram water bowser

We demonstrated the correct branch handling techniques.

Showing the Fram Fire Fighter how to hold the branch correctly

They don't have any fire fighting uniforms at Fram yet so Kevin donated his to the commandant at Fram who put it on and seemed very reluctant to remove it to travel home.

Word has is that he sleeps in the uniform now too.

At 5 we headed back to the hotel in preparation for going to a barbecue at the station at 8pm.

Wed 30

Trip to dam on the Argentina border, started at 6am for 150km drive, spent time on a tour of the dam and then the local museum before heading back on the 150km trip to the United Colonies

Thu 31

Hazmat training similar to the classes in Asuncion in the previous week, followed by our main staple diet of Barbecued Meat.

Fri 1

Shown the cooperative who give the most funding to the Fire Fighters and toured the Yerba packaging plant, returned to hotel for 12 to relax until 2-30 when we were taken to Encarnacion for the 3-30 bus. Heavy storm on way up and the bus leaked a lot, it also stopped at every possible bus stop it could and was standing room only the majority of the trip. We eventually made it back to Asuncion at 10 pm and were back eating supper in the Hotel by 11pm

Sat 2

Heavy rain scuppered the chance to sunbathe so off shopping in the morning.

Sun 3

We headed back home to Sunny Scotland.