

Convoy 28 Argentina

18th September 2009

We travelled from Asuncion to the border crossing point of Clorinda where we crossed into Argentina. We were handed over to the Commander of the newly formed Fire Service of Villa General Guemes Ricardo Spinnelli. We then had to travel about 2 hours to the town of Guemes in the Formosa Region but not before going to the Local Police station to see a couple of wrecked cars where 2 people including a pregnant woman had died. It was a moment I will never forget as they described how with no equipment they ripped the car apart to get the bodies out, already I can see how much we need to do to help these people. Then back in the car to go the town that will be home for the next 3 days.

Once our kit is dropped off at the hostel we are staying at we go across to the Municipality HQ to meet the Intendente of the Town and we discuss what we will be doing and what we require. Our first training session is at the local school where we have about 100 participants including the Firefighters and Police and also some local dignitaries. Gary and I split the class up into 2 classes with Gary doing and I was doing basic B.A.

19th September 2009

Up early as we have a class almost right away, we arrived at the school house we will be using today to find a large group waiting for us to start. We get stuck in with basic Trauma and First Aid.



Most of the morning showing them things related to Car and Motorbike crashes as that is what their biggest problem is –well that and a complete lack of equipment , but at least we can help their soon by sending some .

In the afternoon we start on basic Road Traffic Collision stuff, this is completely from the “BASICS “type of training as none of the trainees had any experience at all, but that said they learned very quickly.

Here we see them practicing stabilisation and casualty care with almost no equipment.



After the exercise we get to tour the town and visit the local hospital. We are shocked at the level of equipment and general standard of the only hospital within 5 hours, there was next to no equipment, the general hygiene due to the equipment being really old and also they had a fire 2 years ago but do not have the money to repair the damage. This is an area I and Gary resolve to assist in.



The local ambulance was also in a pitiful state but only the week before we arrived had transported 5 injured people to the main hospital in Formosa (5 hours away), as you can see it is little more than a pickup van and has no equipment at all.



EVENING!!!!!!!!!!

And we still have to cover Firefighting!

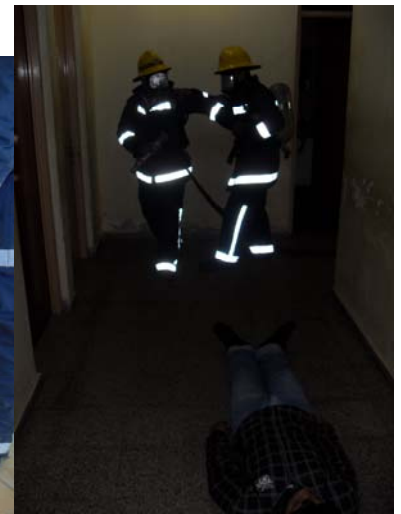
We spend a few hours going over hose running and branch holding before it gets too dark. They have taken in a fantastic amount of information today and we must have done more in the 2 days than I have ever done on any previous mission.

20th September 2009

FINAL DAY

We only have the morning as we have to leave in the early afternoon to get back across the border.

We add all the stuff from yesterday and run several scenarios with searching and rescue from buildings and firefighting high on the agenda.



At the end of the session I can tell you we were a couple of happy bunnies the trainees had worked really hard and had taken in all we had shown them , now if only they had the equipment needed to do the job. WELL WATCH THIS SPACE –IFRA ARE ON THE CASE.

General Guemes now has a partly trained, partly equipped fire service but we need to help them more. They –just like the majority of Argentina live in virtual poverty with little government assistance. But as far as heart, spirit, dedication and generosity go I have to say these people will be hard to beat.



I will never forget my time there and hope to return to help my new friends soon.