

Convoy 1 Bosnia

Convoy Commander David Kay

Instructor Kevin Connor

"Can you help us, we need help" - words that are still as vivid in my mind as the day I heard them - and what became my involvement with IFRA (International Fire & Rescue Association).



It all started back in February 2001. My Brigade had given me leave to take aid to an orphanage in Bosnia. Driving an ancient 17 ton truck, I was in charge of the relief mission, on behalf of an Edinburgh based U.N charity. It was on this mission that I met Faroudin, the Komandir of the local Fire Brigade in Kljuc. Faroudin invited myself and Kevin, my brother, who was navigating my journey, along to meet colleagues. What awaited us at the station was not what I expected - to say I was shocked would be an understatement. They had

just 2 appliances, which at 37 years old were completely inadequate, most of the staff had suffered war wounds and were not provided with any form of protective clothing. Despite these unimaginable conditions, the Firefighters were still expected to run into burning buildings and drive through mine fields - and did so with ardent enthusiasm.

I then rallied friends and neighbours and formed a fundraising committee and by May 2002, with the help of South Queensferry High School, had raised enough funds to purchase an Isuzu Trooper which was soon fitted with equipment and on its way to Kljuc. Faroudin and his men were overwhelmed by our charity and delighted with their new equipment.



At this time I thought that that would be the end of the story, but my new Firemaster, (ex Greater Manchester County Fire Service) Mike Bitcon had mentioned to me before I started out on my last journey that I should volunteer to organize the distribution of redundant equipment to charities, who could then pass it on to needy areas. Upon my return I decided to take up the role and started to form IFRA.

I am fortunate to have the full backing from my Firemaster, who supports IFRA whole heartedly.

