

Пожарная безопасность друзей из России



FIRE SAFETY FRIENDS OF RUSSIA

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It was 4 years from the time of my first meeting with Colonel Sergei Prokopov, Russian Federation Army, Fire Section, to the shipping of aid to Kursk Region Fire and Rescue Service. Four Dennis fire appliances with ladders, light portable pumps, generators and essential hose and a 20 ft sea container with equipment including 1000 prs. of fire boots, 450 sets of protective clothing, 125 chemical and 25 gas suits, 80 helmets, 12 sets of resuscitation equipment, radiation meters and vehicle spares, left the UK at the end of November.



Vehicles leaving Tangmere

Waiting for the E was wise as it also decided to have a defective fuel pump part way between St Petersburg and Kursk. Our Russian colleagues solved the problem by borrowing a vehicle fuel tank from a nearby fire station, placed it on the back seat and gravity fed the engine with fuel for the remainder of the journey.

I arrived in Kursk with Tim Eady and Darren Wickings just after 9 am on 13th December instead of the evening of the 12th due to the internal flight being delayed because of heavy snow falling at Kursk Airport. This meant we went almost immediately to the Kursk Fire Service Workshops to give introductory training to our colleagues on the vehicles and equipment.



Darren and Tim introducing our Russian colleagues to the equipment

The vehicles arrived at St Petersburg a week later than expected as the E Reg. decided to have a flat battery when it was time to load onto the ship, so after some replacement batteries supplied and fitted by workshops it was sent on the next vessel. Wisely as it turned out, Sergei decided to wait until he had all 4 vehicles before heading for Kursk. The shipping line Finnlines and agents East European Transport Systems were very helpful assisting with the problem and allaying my anxieties. They did not charge extra for either the failure to get the vehicle on the original ferry or the additional ice breaker charge normally applied in December. Many thanks to them for their assistance.



Half way between St Petersburg and Kursk

The following day consisted of meetings with the Mayor of Kursk and the General responsible for emergency planning and response. In between we were confronted with the spectacle of all four vehicles lined up on Red Square, Kursk, about 40 Fire Service personnel on parade and piped military music. Cameras and interviewers from all 5 local TV channels also being present. The brain had to work rather quickly as I had not expected to make a speech and had therefore not prepared one. Tim Eady likewise had to think quickly, but it all seemed to go well and everyone appeared pleased.

Later in the week I also met the Chairman of Deputies for the Region and we had tours of special risks and fire stations in the area.



The vehicles being Blessed in Red Square, Kursk during the official handing over ceremony

The fire personal were very pleased with the vehicles and they together with the General and local politicians expressed their gratitude to West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Fire Safety Friends of Russia both privately and publicly. The provision of the high pressure hose reels was particularly important as that has made a significant improvement to fire fighting capability. Also the 13.5 m ladders will reach one more storey above that reached by their standard ladder. We were left in no doubt these vehicles were very important to them and the enthusiasm shown by the personnel to learn as much as possible from Tim and Darren was very impressive. The appliances were allocated to Stations and operational within days of arriving in Kursk.



Presenting the vehicle keys to the Station Commanders



Operational in a Kursk Fire Station

The Mayor, Chairman of Deputies and the General all expressed a desire to support and help the Trust in any way they can and have asked me to look into the possibility of opening a branch in Kursk so that they can help raise money for the project.

Although the schedule was tight and I did not have the amount of time I wished to spend at the hospital, it was possible to meet Anatoly, head of the burns unit and some of his team, to discuss the current situation and his forthcoming visit to UK. It was interesting and informative. They are using the latest stem cell technology to grow skin which is impressive.

Anatoly has managed in the last year to procure some money to improve the structure and decoration of the unit which has provided easy to clean hygienic surfaces.



Anatoly explaining the latest skin grafting procedures



Meeting one of the 30 patients

They do not yet have a computer system for records and passing information. I am hoping to progress the visit of Anatoly to the UK as soon as possible.

The container only arrived in Kursk the week commencing 1st January. The delay was due to the container having to be paired with another 20 ft for the rail journey from Archangel to Kursk. Possibly due to this it was unloaded at the wrong railway station and was lost for a few days. Thankfully recovered.



Container leaving Tangmere

I am still reformatting the manual for the school children. It was somewhat delayed with all the work needed to get the vehicles and container shipped, but it is now almost complete and I am expecting to send copies for approval and proof reading before the end of January. Preliminary arrangements were made before I left Russia for me to return to Kursk at the end of February to have full discussions with all interested departments there, to agree the best way to teach the children the contents.



This has been quite a fast learning experience, but now we have the contacts and system in place and the knowledge with regard to essential paperwork which should make life a little easier in the future.

Many, many thanks to everyone. The fund rasing, practical help collecting equipment, sorting, cleaning preparing and loading have all been an essential part of the success. Also many thanks for the personal support I have received when sometimes there seemed to be too many hurdles and far too much to do.

Martin Burrell has expressed the wish for personal contacts and exchanges between people in Russia and the UK to be encouraged and expanded and the Mayor of Kursk wishes to twin with a town in the UK. I look forward to progressing both as soon as possible.

The objective of the trust is :-
TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION AND WELFARE OF THE PUBLIC IN RUSSIA IN THE SUBJECTS OF FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY, FIRE FIGHTING AND THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF BURNS AND SIMILAR INJURIES BY PROVISION OF TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT.

The whole effort is aimed at offering the knowledge and experience gained in UK to help with :-

- [1] **PREVENTION OF FIRES AND SAFE BUILDING DESIGN**
- [2] **AN ADEQUATELY EQUIPPED RESPONSE TO FIRES**
- [3] **BEST TREATMENT OF BURN AND SCALD CASUALTIES**
- [4] **EFFECTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS**

With approximately 160 people killed in fire every year in Kursk Region alone, including around 6 children, there is a pressing need to preserve these precious lives.

We are a new charity with existing trustees and supporters paying their own costs to help the project, including travel and accommodation when in Russia. We have made a good start and have the opportunity to provide equipment and training year on year. Although we obtain equipment and can provide training opportunities at no cost, it is expensive shipping equipment to Russia and facilitating visits by professionals from Russia to places of excellence in the UK. We are seeking to reduce the costs but at present expect the 2006 programme will need about £6000 to complete. It is hoped the project will develop both here and in Russia to include more Counties and Regions, forging not only long lasting co-operation , but also friendship.

**ANY HELP, FINANCIAL OR PRACTICAL, THAT CAN BE GIVEN WILL BE
GRATEFULLY APPRECIATED BY ALL.**

LATE NEWS - Sadly I have been advised that 6 people died in fires in the town of Kursk on New Years Day. 9 were killed the week before we arrived. This dreadful loss of life needs to be curtailed urgently and illustrates how important all our efforts are.

Chris Holgate. Chairman