

## Humanitarian Aid for Ukraine via the Charity, Pickups for Peace

### The 12<sup>th</sup> Convoy & 38 vehicles plus aid delivered to Ukraine – end April 2024

Mark Bunting & Rory Graham delivered a 4x4 Pickup to Lviv in Ukraine as part of the 12<sup>th</sup> Convoy by Pickups for Peace (P4P). A total of 38 4x4 pickups and considerable amounts of aid were donated. Every vehicle was full. We hope this report, coupled with the [P4P Instagram page](#) will give you an insight into this Charity. In all, 340 pickups have been sent & these are then used on the frontline to transport the wounded & supplies. The Ukrainians told us on many occasions that these vehicles are incredibly useful and **do save lives**.

### The fund raising & budget

Thanks to your funding, which has now risen to **£13,700**, we were able to buy a 2006 Toyota Hilux with some 170k miles on the clock for **£5,000**.

A further **£7,000** was spent on 3 generators, 6 night vision binoculars, 4 drones, and health care equipment including IFAK's, Tourniquets and Trauma Packs.

The surplus, after our donations to pay for travel, food and hotel bills will be spent on Humanitarian Aid items for the June trip. Thank you for your donations, and Gift Aid has added to the total raised for the Charity.

But that is not all, because by our estimate the value of the kit (listed below) which was donated at our event in Hunt's Supermarket in Sherborne, and from locals in Somerset, was c. **£8,000**.



- **For cars** – we took Jump leads, a set of winter spare tyres, jerry cans, litres of screen wash & WD40, engine & tractor oil, tool kits & tow ropes.
- **For the Military** – we took, some quality military clothes, ruck sacks, tents & sleeping bags & 6 pairs of boots
- **For Wellbeing** – we were donated a huge number of Women's and Men's clothes as well as crutches & protein bars.
- In **Electricals** – we took 150 much needed mobile phones and lots of connectors & computers & iPads
- **Tools** taken included heavy-duty cutters, 6 chain saws, many spades, 5 tarpaulins & 100's of heavy duty ratchet straps & ties
- **The Vehicle** (nicknamed "Davy") made it to Ukraine in three days, and despite being 18 years old is in remarkably good condition, and we feel confident will be of assistance on the front-line ferrying supplies and the wounded.

The photos above show Davy with 1) the kit laid out before packing began at Rory's house in North Cheriton & 2) Davy fully packed & ready for the off from my house in Pen Selwood.

## **The Journey**

In all we covered 1,382 miles, and throughout the journey “our Davy” appeared to improve, relishing the mileage and a run out on some good roads.

**Day 1.** We crossed the channel via Eurotunnel and stayed in a B&B close to Antwerp. We were fortunate to be able to offload the 3 suitcases from the roof rack at the end of the first day to another vehicle, which allowed us to make faster progress on days 2 and 3.

**Day 2** was a long day with some 11 hours at the wheel, travelling through Belgium, Denmark, Germany and into Poland. The time passed quickly with podcasts & numerous changes of driver. Our destination was a spectacular Hunting Lodge close to Warsaw, which had been booked by the Charity. This was the official starting point for our convoy and here we met the other 60 drivers for the first time. Early bed beckoned.



**Day 3** involved an early start at 7.15am, after the photocall. Our rendezvous point at 1pm was close to the Ukrainian border for a debrief. We then approached the border in a convoy, and it took several hours for the Customs to deal with the immaculately prepared P4P paperwork.

The long wait included Rory playing the bagpipes and me offering fruit cake to other drivers.

Once through the Border, we were provided with a police escort going through red lights

and making swift progress to the Mayor’s Office in Lviv.

An experience none of us will forget!

**Day 4** included a visit to the Field of Mars in Lviv. Our minibus was full of noise & chatter, but as we turned the corner and saw the field there was immediate silence.

The reality of this brutal war and what we were doing here struck home as we witnessed four or





five fresh graves that had been dug in the last three to five days in this Cemetery alone. Rory was privileged to play the lament 'Flowers of the Forest' on the pipes in deepest respect to the fallen.

**Emotional, sobering, humbling and tough** were the words which many of us used to best describe this visit to the Field of Mars. Seeing the grandparents, husbands, wives, families and children at the graves of the dead soldiers (both men and women) under arms ensured there wasn't a dry eye to be seen in our group.

**Handover of the vehicle** - following this emotionally charged visit we were driven back to the Lviv's Town Hall for the formal handing over of our vehicles and stores to the Military authorities together with Press/TV, speeches and photographs.

A speech by the Mayor expressing the collective thanks of the Ukrainians included a few noteworthy points.

- These 4 x 4 pickups are the only effective vehicle that can dash in across the muddy fields right up to the treelines where the frontlines trenches are, to then load up and retrieve the wounded back to the regiments first aid dressing posts.
- The pickups use their speed and manoeuvrability to dodge the ever-watching eyes of the Russian drones.
- Their presence literally saves countless lives despite only having an estimated lifespan of some 7 weeks before being destroyed.
- A particular point of pride was when she explained that if you asked any Ukrainian in the street which nation gave the most morale and consistent support to Ukraine, the answer used to be UK and USA, and now it is unquestionably the UK.



**City Tour.** In the afternoon, we were fortunate to be given the most wonderful and interesting tour of the City of Lviv.

Our guide, Artum gave some fantastic insights, and Lviv will become a major tourist destination once this war is over.



For the purposes of this report, one building stood out. My photos show the **Saints Peter and Paul Garrison Church** in Lviv.

The walls of the church are adorned with rows of photos of Ukrainian soldiers who have been killed in the war. It is a beautiful church, but a sobering place to visit.

The day ended with a dinner and more speeches thanking us for our help to Ukraine. A noteworthy speech came from a frontline Colonel whose troops had been recipients of our vehicles and supplies including one

**Day 5** started with breakfast from where we could spot the crowds gathering at the Garrison Church. The Morning church service was well attended by Ukrainian families with standing room only, but a worthwhile experience to stand with the Ukrainians for some 10 minutes and reflect on what they are doing to defend western democratic values.

**Our trip home** - From Lviv, the Charity had organised a minibus to take us to the border with Poland. Once across, we took a minibus and train to Krakow from where we flew home.

## Conclusion

The April convoy was another huge success for Pickups for Peace. Our thanks go to the Founders of the Charity, Alastair Stewart & Vince Gillingham, and to Georgia Leeming for her tireless organisation of this amazing trip. The logistics were faultless, and the briefings to the point.



We have made many new friends and just hope that we have “done something” to help the Ukrainians in their hour of need.

We would both highly recommend anyone joining future convoys and taking a vehicle to Ukraine.

Do get in touch if you would like to discuss or have a vehicle which needs driving – we would both do it again!

Thank you again for your support and **Slava Ukraini**

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