

Bosnia, November 1999

Unknown author

Dragana, an 80-year-old widow, greeted us when we walked into her one roomed shack three quarters of the way up a cold and bitter mountain in Bosnia. We had been brought to her home, 5 km from the rutted dirt track which served as a road, and the last 1.5 km on foot after even the army Land Rover had given, up by a neighbour who knew of her plight and hoped we would be able to help. The neighbour was on our list of families without income in the battle-ravaged village of Balvine, high on the mountain ridge overlooking the central Bosnian town of Mrkonjic Grad.

In spite of her own absolute poverty, she has a family of seven sharing only two weather proof rooms with no income, this woman's first thought was to ask us to help her elderly neighbour. A Rotary Disaster Box was opened and shared out, the old lady got the warm woollen blanket, new sheets, a warm woollen hat, a fine pair of gents leather gloves, a pair of gents boots, an collapsible umbrella, candles, matches, a frying pan and a bar of soap. The rest of the Disaster Box went to Dragana's neighbours.

This was just one brief moment form the convoys activity which, over the course of five days in Bosnia, delivered aid to 600 families and 17 schools, displaced persons centres, orphanages etc.

In total the convoy delivered 34 tonnes of aid. This may only be a drop in the ocean of what is needed overall, but through our method of distribution, that 34 tonnes was delivered to the doorsteps of some of the most needy in the region, not left to rot in some anonymous warehouse, not left in the care of the local bureaucrats, but given without regard to ethnic background to people identified by partners we can trust.

We lived up to the name on the side of the trucks we delivered Hope and Aid Direct.



Working with British forces gives us security and on the ground intelligence