

THW

Technisches
Hilfswerk 



In April 2003 I was privileged to undertake a German National Certificate in "Führen und Leiten auf der operativ-taktischen Ebene 2, (Leading and Managing at the Operational Tactical Level 2), at the National Academy for Disaster Management, Emergency Planning and Civil Defence, Arweihler Germany.



After the course, my host, Christian Endress was able to provide a study tour of numerous THW training centres and emergency centres.

THW (Technisches Hilfswerk) is the disaster relief organization of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is the largest and most respected disaster relief organisation in Europe. The diverse services offered are supplied by more than 40,000 volunteer technicians, engineers and specialists, approximately 850 full-time employees, and 6,000 specialist vehicles. Their technical expertise includes disaster recovery, debris clearing, electricity supply, water damage/pumps, management/communications, bridge-building, essential infrastructure restoration, water hazards, search and rescue, logistics, drinking water supply and oil damage. Their premier international response team is entitled SEEBEA (Rapid Deployment Unit Search and Rescue). In the event of an operation, this specialist response unit and their equipment are ready to board conventional airliners within 6 hours of receiving the alarm. 70 volunteer specialists are skilled in working with electronic location equipment, rescue dogs and modern rescue equipment. Their mission is to stabilize the situation and to locate survivors within the usual survival time of 72 hours.



The physical and intellectual resources are quite staggering. 810 technical platoons with 40 volunteers. Each platoon consists of 1 command squad with 4 volunteers and 3 special sections with 12 volunteers.

1,620 rescue and salvage specialist vehicles

264 general infrastructure (Emergency Tenders, Trucks)

132 debris clearance (cranes, multipurpose bulldozers, Explosives)

132 boat and pontoon

66 electric supply (Large Power Generators)

66 pumping and sewage

66 search and detection

66 command, control and communication

66 logistics

32 water supply and treatment

16 temporary bridge construction

16 oil pollution

6 sections for the Rapid Deployment Unit Search and Rescue.

The Federal Government has frequently ordered THW to provide international assistance in crisis situations such as earthquakes, flooding, drought and refugee emergencies. In general these operations are integrated into plans of action of the EU or the UN. Hundreds of missions abroad, many of them in Africa.

Distribute repair or construct water networks

During the Goma operation in 1994/1995, 80 workers and 400 tonnes of equipment were flown into Zaire in a few days.

producing up to 3 million litres of life-saving drinking water every day

100 million DM spent on completed special projects by 1998

Bosnia-Herzegovina 1993, over 150 engineers working with 80 local workers on reconstruction and emergency rehab of approx. 9,000 homes, 12 schools and medical facilities, and reconstruction of 2 primary schools

Essential restoration of the power and water supply

Operation of heavy-duty building machinery

Construction of public works of East and West Mostar

Establishment of 5 construction yards for the free supply of building materials to the local population

Distribution of approx. 60,000 m² of window glass

Leadership

Project Management

Foreign culture and protocols

Engineering (Bridge building, Infrastructure)

Logistics

Health and Hygiene Services

CSI



Membership Categories

Youth (from 10 can join THW Jugend)

Fun but practical skills, community values
lead to active and support roles

National Service (Military or Civil alternative)

Active (min. 120 Hours active service per year)

**Reserve (National Training Completed,
Senior Volunteer**

Social and support
No compulsory training or attendance







