

**NEWS**  
Isle of Man 

**General News**

**Island firefighter in training mission to Argentina** 11 August 2008

ISLAND firefighter Tony Varley is travelling to South America this week as part of a mission to pass on practical advice, knowledge and training skills to officers in Argentina.



Station Officer Varley, who has 30 years' experience with the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service, will be part of a 10-man team of volunteers working under the auspices of the 911 Fund. The organisation was established in the aftermath of the World Trade Centre tragedy on September 11, 2001, when 343 New York firefighters lost their lives.

Since that time the 911 Fund has endeavoured to improve resources, education and training in countries across the globe such as Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama and regions of Europe. Dozens of fire appliances and millions of pounds worth of equipment have been donated as part of continued efforts to enhance civilian safety and minimise the loss of property through fire.

The Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service, which falls under the umbrella of the Department of Home Affairs, has developed particularly close links with the 911 Fund and the New York Fire Department. Local firefighters helped to raise thousands of pounds for bereaved families in the wake of the

9/11 disaster and have funded their own trips to New York each year to join parades and remembrance services.

That relationship has been further strengthened by visits to the Isle of Man by Dr Stephan Hittmann, a serving senior officer during the terrorist attack and now the president of the 911 Fund. Station Officer Varley, who also supported the recent Ro-Man-Aid Manx charity efforts in Romania, will fly to New York tomorrow (Tuesday) to meet Dr Hittmann before travelling to Buenos Aires with the rest of the group on Thursday.

The Island firefighter is taking annual leave in order to make the trip as well as contributing towards the travel costs. The principal aim of the unpaid, seven-day visit is to share knowledge, training techniques and experience with fire service colleagues in South America.

Five appliances acquired by the 911 Fund have been donated to fire crews in Argentina and part of the work will focus on the correct use of the vehicles and associated equipment. Numerous other training topics will be covered such as search and rescue, leadership development, fire prevention and safety education, structural and open land fires, breathing apparatus procedures and casualty recovery from road traffic collisions.

Station Officer Varley, who is the only non-American volunteer in the group, said:

'This is an opportunity to further the excellent work of the 911 Fund and to exchange experiences, advice and best practice with officers from other countries. As well as taking Isle of Man training packages to Argentina, I hope to pick up ideas that will benefit my colleagues back home.'

Chief Fire Officer Brian Draper added:

'Opportunities arise for members of the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service to become involved in charitable efforts in many different parts of the world. It should be emphasised that this type of work is undertaken during annual leave and has no cost implication for the Manx taxpayer. I'm sure Tony will be an excellent ambassador for the Isle of Man and that the officers in Argentina will benefit from his specialist skills and 30 years' experience.'

**Photo caption:** Chief Fire Officer Brian Draper hands over an Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service plaque to Station Officer Tony Varley to present to fire officers in Argentina.

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We bring you Manx news and sports items. If you'd like to send any information or news releases to us then please feel free to do so to [webmaster@manx.net](mailto:webmaster@manx.net) and we would be more than happy to consider sharing your news with the Island!

### Island firefighter in training mission to Argentina

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Photo caption: Chief Fire Officer Brian Draper hands over an Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service plaque to Station Officer Tony Varley to present to fire officers in Argentina.

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