

To: Richard Brown <richard.brown1645@yahoo.co.uk>

Sent: Monday, 1 July 2013, 10:38

Subject: Re: Germany - logistics

Hi Richard

It's a few years since I did this for Memmingen but it wasn't terribly complicated.

Van hire is fine but they do charge extra for taking the van abroad. You need to tell them you are going abroad but I wouldn't mention the guns - just complicates things and technically/legally they don't need to know

We covered the van cost (and all other group sundries like gifts for the hosts etc) by asking everyone for a flat amount - say £50 (or whatever is a rough estimate of Van + ferries + fuel split by the number of people) that is payable up front and not refundable by everyone going whether they choose to put a bag/musket in the van or not. This also helps as you don't get anyone mucking you about and pulling out at the last minute. On one occasion we had to get an extra £20 later on from everyone as we went over budget but I found that so long as you were clear what the money was for and where it had gone then everyone was OK about it. Again the trick is to let everyone know up front what's expected, why you are doing it that way and make it non negotiable. We explain this money for Memmingen trips as a "deposit" to ensure your place on the trip and even our members who live in Germany had to pay it. To make it affordable it has to be all about logistics for the whole group and not about whose got what on the van. If we have any money left over we have kept it as a starter for the next trip.

The van team did not need to pay travel as this was paid by the group but they do still need to pay the flat fee.

The biggest thing with the muskets is to get your local police firearms chap onside. Ours here was very helpful and as well as smoothing the paperwork helped with some tips I'll pass on. The biggest piece of advice though is to involve them as much as you can and hopefully get their help and interest with the project. They can make the whole thing painless and smooth or could, if inclined, make it next to impossible.

Everyone taking a musket needs a European Firearms Pass - EFP - they will need to apply for this with their own police force.

What we then did here was, with the help of my local firearms, transferred everyone's musket to my shotgun certificate (I think I had 23 or something) so that all the muskets in the van were on my license) and I had an EFP with all of the muskets on it so that for the purposes of traveling all of the muskets were legally mine.

We also put all of the muskets on the certificate of and got an EFP with all of them for another person in the van so that if one or the other of you goes off sick, falls off the ferry or

there is a problem there are still people present who can take responsibility for the weapons etc.

This was done well in advance - so long as the muskets are on both your license and the license of the owner there should be no problem.

The weekend before we set off for Germany everyone came round to mine and dropped off muskets. I had no way of storing them securely until departure but our firearms officers luckily more or less winked and said "that's your responsibility and what I don't know won't hurt me" - I just kept them in the upstairs cupboard but the letter of the law would suggest you need to keep them in proper storage. You could take all barrels off and keep in gun cupboard (or a few if some people are local) from the time of collection to the time of departure.

Or ideally don't collect muskets until the day of departure. Same goes in reverse when you get back - you need to get them back to people as soon as possible to avoid having to store them, I then sent my license and EFP to the police who removed all the extra muskets again. As I said this is all much easier if you are on good terms with the local firearms dept and they are fully aware of what's going on.

Before the actual trip it is a good idea to prepare the way by letting everyone know you are coming - customs at your port of departure, the ferry company, etc. If you can get bits of paper from Ferry/Customs etc then so much the better and try and get names of people who are aware of you but prepare the way before you as best you can so nobody you come across is suddenly freaking out that you unexpectedly have a van full of guns. Likewise an official looking letter of invitation from the organisers of the event you are going to could be helpful

Always remember (again a tip from my local police) that customs people, border guards and ferry companies do not think it's amusing or whimsical that you are a reenactor and will not think this normal - they just see some shaggy looking guys in a van with a load of guns and the less eccentric and more straight up and business like you can be about the whole thing the better

I called everyone I could in advance and also it meant when we turned up at the port everyone was expecting us - in fact we were welcomed with "Oh you must be the guys with the guns", got a special sign in the window of the van saying "firearms" and were fast tracked through the queue and on to the Ferry. Customs simply pulled one musket, compared the serial number to my license and then waved us on. On the way home nobody even asked us about anything - we just piled on the ferry and drove off in the UK.

On the whole it's been remarkably easy when I have done it but only, I think, because I prepared and covered all the bases before setting off.

Hope this all helps but if you have any specific questions let me know - happy to help

Good luck

Cheers

On 17 June 2013 11:11, Richard Brown <richard.brown1645@yahoo.co.uk> wrote:
Hi

I trust you're well - been an awfully long time.

I think Keith Jones mentioned that I'm co-ordinating a trip to the Battle of Leipzig for our little Prussian Napoleonic unit and that I could do with some advice on how you guys do Memmingen.

If you've got a minute, I'd really appreciate it if you could give me some top tips on the following ...

- taking muskets abroad
- hiring vehicles and taking them abroad
- what sort of costs were involved in the way you did it
- ferries
- anything useful - what to avoid, what to look out for

Don't feel the need to go to town on it, I'm sure you've got plenty of other things to be doing - some bullet points for me to follow up would be just fine.

Thanks very much - any help gratefully received

Cheers
Rich

Richard Brown ('Plastic' to some)
Ruperts/Prussian Landwehr