

Leg 3 Trip Day One

What a nightmare flight, sleep not an option. Scenery coming into Almaty though is quite interesting – very flat arid area with small denser areas of populus and agriculture surrounded by mountains.

Reminds me of somewhere ut cannot remember where – too tired.

Customs are interesting, looks like one plane in and one plane out. We were able to watch our bags going around the carousel whilst still queuing in the immigration line.

We were met outside and whisked away to the Almaty Land Rover dealership; they also sold Ford and Volvo, where the vehicles were stored waiting for us to arrive.

Vehicles looking a little dusty but systems check OK, get the roofs loaded up and our kit inside – good to go – just needed a fuel top up, 40l per vehicle only allowed at the garage and we were all topped up.

The guys from the dealership escorted us to the main road to Khorgos; our first objective 350km away, then that was it, we were on our own.

To say that the roads are straight would be an understatement but to say that they were undulating would be an even bigger understatement. Although perfectly passable with the Land Rover convoy, there were big areas of distorted and twisted surfaces to negotiate. We seem to be the only vehicles on the road with decent windscreens and tyres. Scenery a pleasant mix of mountains and plains.

Still, we made good time – check the tracker data to support this comment – better than some points in Europe.

Thank goodness for Aircon though, temperatures outside getting upto 37 deg C.

We needed a couple of snooze / power naps along the way after the previous duration without sleep.

The vehicles are very prominent and people happily smile and wave at our convoy plus when stationary take some pictures of us.

Got to the Kajahkstan order circa 6:30 p.m. but unfortunately the China side was closed. This was because China was 2 hours ahead so although the borders closed at 7 we would have had to get there by 5 Kajahkstan time.



Nothing for it but to tough it out until 8 a.m. tomorrow. So we found a secluded site out of town with views of the mountains.

After a meal of pasta; (it would have been good if leg 2 had left us some matches !!!!!), a wet wipe wash and some tea we settled in for the night.

Some slept in tents and others in the vehicles. With a smaller team than most, everyone depended on and helped each other plus plenty of equipment to go around i.e. 1 tent each and two mats to lie on.

Great night of exhausted but happy sleep, waking to another dry day. No breakfast, food is for wimps and off to the border crossing.