

United front?

As the 2006 World Cup kicked off, Supt Roger Evans, who led British police officers in Germany, writes from the front line about the international operation and why it has helped to reduce hooliganism.

I have travelled around Europe with Arsenal FC during the ten seasons that I have helped to police Highbury stadium, however this only involved one, at most two, nights away from the UK. This year my experience would become crucial when I found out I would be leading a team of uniformed UK police officers to work in Germany for the 2006 World Cup. The reality of this current posting is that, me and the team of officers I work with could be spending up to five and a half weeks away from home.

My task was to identify, select and train officers to travel to Germany, liaise with the German authorities, develop a memorandum of understanding, drawing up a kind of contract to set out what was expected, with the German Federal Police and make the arrangements to get 45 uniformed officers to Germany.



Illustration: Paul Rigby

We are assisting the Bundespolizei, the German Federal Police, or BPol, to police the transport infrastructure within Germany. BPol is responsible, amongst other things, for railways, borders and airports.

This is the first time a policing operation of this kind has been carried out with British police officers in uniform working alongside their German counterparts. During the Champions League and UEFA Cup officers from the UK were only deployed in an advisory capacity in civilian clothes. The current operation includes uniformed officers with police powers.

The purpose of deploying uniformed officers in Germany was to enhance the ports policing operation being conducted within the UK, provide reassurance to English supporters arriving in Germany and providing a link between the German police and English supporters. This concept has been debated in the past and appeared to have been placed in the 'too difficult tray' until now.

Earlier this year David Swift, then ACPO lead on football issues, also chief constable of Staffordshire Police, spoke to the German authorities who decided to invite police officers from the European countries participating in the 2006 World Cup.

Thirty officers from British Transport Police were selected to travel to Germany, along with 15



Photography: Empics

Most fans were peaceful: an English Football fan in the centre of Cologne after England drew with Sweden 2-2

representatives from Lancashire, Merseyside, Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Thames Valley, Avon and Somerset, Hampshire, Metropolitan, South Yorkshire and Cleveland police forces. These officers were selected on the basis of their football, international liaison or operational experience. A further four officers were selected to work with the Länder (State) Police.

There are around 14 plainclothed officers designed to work undercover as 'spotters' looking for known supporters who could cause problems.

The operational phase started on May 30 when five colleagues from BPol came to London to familiarise the UK officers with German legislation, immigration procedures and German fan and hooligan behaviour, which differs from that of English fans. At the conclusion of this training all officers working with BPol were given 'entrusted officer' status – effectively meaning we have the same powers of stop, search and arrest as German BPol officers. The Länder officers were not included in this training as each State in Germany has its own legislature with resulting differences in law. Because England is playing in three different Länder during the Group stages it was not practical to provide such training for these four officers.

On June 4 we travelled to Germany and are currently based in a BPol barracks complex about 4 miles North-East of Frankfurt city centre. The BTP officers are deployed on the railways, U-bahn, the German Underground, S-bahn, suburban railway, and trams. Six officers are working at Frankfurt's main airport with a further six based at Frankfurt-Hahn airport, about 80 miles West of Frankfurt. The latter deployment was

considered important as Hahn receives flights from the cheaper airlines, such as EasyJet and Ryanair, a popular choice with football supporters.

As can be expected, the appearance of British bobbies on the streets of Frankfurt has aroused massive media interest, however, this has had beneficial effects as both English and German people have an expectation of seeing us out here and, almost invariably, are delighted to see us. The benefits of patrolling in uniform, at all times accompanied by German colleagues, were rapidly demonstrated on the first operational deployment on the evening of June 7.

A member of the public approached a BTP officer and provided information about the presence of risk supporters in Amsterdam and their likely travel movements to Frankfurt. This information was fed in to the intelligence system and was substantiated from another source. It is highly unlikely that an English supporter would have approached a German police officer in such a manner.

As I write this, England is playing Paraguay. British police officers are spending their fourth day patrolling the streets, transport systems and airports of Frankfurt, receiving positive comments from virtually everyone. The mood up to now has been good; the feeling on the streets and in the cafes and bars of Frankfurt is good humoured, if a little noisy. We have been able to reassure our German hosts that the vast majority of England fans are here for a good time and point out that short (or no) hair, an England shirt and sunburnt skin does not make someone a football hooligan.

Diary of an officer:

Inspector Bernie Swift, the football liaison officer with Merseyside Police for Liverpool Football Club, writes.

Months leading up to the World Cup: A number of officers, consisting of staff from UK Forces were selected to form the contingent for the FIFA World Cup 2006. Our task was to accompany German Federal police officers at airports and railway stations as well as providing assistance to State Police in the cities where matches are being played

In the few months that followed during my 'call up' it was necessary to visit Germany on a planning mission as well as travelling to London for a number of meetings. I also had my normal day-to-day responsibilities for policing matches on Merseyside. Whilst in Germany I met a Federal Police colleague, Dietmar Wolf. Dietmar proved to be a valuable friend and colleague. Prior to deployment in Germany, arrangements were made for Dietmar and four German colleagues to visit the UK and provide training to those officers fortunate to have been selected for the mission.

May 30 to June 3: Officers are located at Hendon Police College for training. The UK officers were to be awarded police powers or 'entrusted' under German Federal Law. I was to take charge of 12 police officers and deploy at

Airports. The party of officers were all strangers to one another but they soon developed friendships and good working relationships.

Officers departed for Germany by coach. Around 12 hours later we arrived in Frankfurt.

June 10: At 14.00hrs on Saturday, June 10, England were due to play their first match against Paraguay at the Waldstadion in Frankfurt. Officers were deployed at Frankfurt and Hahn Airports to keep an eye out for football fans coming in and provide a visible presence. Six officers had to remain at Hahn Airport for the duration of the tournament as cheaper where fans are likely to use the cheaper airlines which fly into this point. The remaining staff were re-deployed from one venue to another.

England 1 Paraguay 0!

June 12: A number of officers are still located at Hahn Airport but the rest were transferred to Nuremburg for the match at the Frankenstadion between England and Trinidad Tobago.

So far, trouble has been kept to a minimum.

British officer PC Robert Pritchard, with a football fan in the centre of Frankfurt.

