

Having returned from my “experience of a lifetime”, made possible by the Arthur Troop Scholarship, I find myself sitting at my desk at work, surrounded by challenge coins, badges, a course certificate and a digital voice recorder with telephone pick up microphone headset, the latter being gifted to me by a very kind gentleman that supplies covert equipment to officers in the States.

Having been asked numerous times already on my second day back at work “what’s it like to be back” I can only answer truthfully, it’s a big come down.

I found out I had been awarded an Arthur Troop Scholarship on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013 via an e-mail from Kees Sal. Like many others I had to read the e-mail a few times to make sure it said what I thought it said. Then I phoned the UK IPA office to triple check. It was correct.

My original intention was to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> annual United States IPA training seminar in Florida, sadly this didn’t come to fruition as the event was cancelled.

I made contact with IPA members I had discussed the training seminar with, who told me about the International Association of Undercover Officers.

After a little research I found the perfect opportunity – Narcotics, Vice and Street Crime Supervisors training, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

With a good background in drugs work and in tackling street level crime, along with the desire to enhance my supervisory skills, I felt this course would be perfect. Having never visited the States it was also a chance to fulfil an ambition of experiencing Las Vegas.

I made contact with retired ATF agent Charlie Fuller, the director of the I.A.O.U.O. who was delighted to offer me a place on the course. The potential 25 hours travelling not putting me off in the slightest.

To remain within the allowed bursary I had to arrange flights with a few connections I flew from Edinburgh on the 4<sup>th</sup> April to firstly Heathrow to then fly to Seattle and finally on to Vegas.

The first of my flights provided a surprise. Seated next to me was Professor June Andrews, one of the leading voices on Dementia in the United Kingdom. Professor Andrews had previously presented at the Scottish Police College, although we had never formally met before. This led to a very quick journey as we picked each others

brains on the management of missing persons and interaction of the police with individuals suffering Dementia.

I finally arrived after a 25 hour travel experience.

At the registration event I met with the main course instructors. Charlie Fuller, whom I had been in contact with, a retired ATF agent with 27 years law enforcement experience with expertise in undercover, electronic surveillance and training. Gayland Hammack, a retired Sergeant with 27 years with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. Gayland worked 17 years in the field of Special Operations and was the training co-ordinator for LVMPD.

Gayland has also provided training to Law Enforcement agencies throughout the States, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary. I also met Dave Redemann, a detective with the Seattle Police Department. Dave having 27 years experience in law enforcement, specifically being an expert undercover operative working 2 long term undercover operations (one being 4 years in duration) and having his own undercover defensive tactics school.

I was immediately welcomed and impressed with the knowledge the instructors had of the International Police Association. I was told of another Arthur Troop Scholar who had recently attended their training only months before.

I was amazed at the wealth of experience and working knowledge they all had, and quickly recognised why this course had been recommended by fellow IPA officers in the states as "the prestige training available in this field."

On Monday morning I attended the first of our classes. A round of introductions from the 100 or so delegates quickly gave me an impression of the varied levels of rank, experience and geography of those attending. Everyone from Operational Undercover Detectives to Captains of large policing agencies introduced their experience and where they had travelled from. Upon my own turn coming, the announcement I was from Scotland prompted a few claps.

The first class we had was led by Sean Riley the founder of SafeCallNow.Org, a comprehensive, confidential, 24 hour crisis referral service for all public safety employees, all emergency personnel and their families U.S. wide.

The journey we were taken through by Sean in his own experiences was very high impact and is a practice I will be looking to highlight in Scotland as a potential avenue for development in staff welfare.

Over the next two days we also had inputs from the Director of the training organisation Charlie Fuller, these related to supervisory responsibilities when managing undercover personnel and indeed any operational policing staff.

Tuesday ended with experienced undercover operative Dave Redemann delivering inputs on undercover training issues. As well as this however Dave included as much of his own learning as he could in what could have easily been a course in itself. I felt this was a highlight of the training course, due to the candid emotional nature of the presentation. And is something that I have already found to have affected me in a new determination to be physically and mentally at my best for returning to operational policing later this year, as Dave put it "What is the silver medal in a conflict situation?"

Wednesday delivered more very high standard training, being fortunate to have completed a qualification in training design and delivery I am now a critical participant in training where I am aware of what is best practice. There was plenty of best practice throughout my training in Las Vegas. The day focused on managing covert operations (delivered by Gayland Hammack) and an overview of Vice Operations delivered by Lieutenant Karen Hughes of the Las Vegas Vice Squad. The scale of the vice criminality in the area being something I previously had not comprehended – with 27,000 vice arrests over the past 5 years and 1386 sex trafficking victims identified (821 were children).

On Wednesday evening I was invited to a barbecue at a Seattle officer's holiday home in Las Vegas where his neighbour, a Las Vegas officer and others joined us. I was made to feel very welcome and was impressed that they had heard of the IPA although they had never considered joining. Before the evening had ended I'm sure there were a few sign ups online.

Thursday was another packed day of learning with further inputs from Gayland Hammack on managing operations and an excellent input on the psychological effects of high pressure environments in policing such as undercover and covert work as well as in traumatic situations for emergency responders by Dr Laura Brodie PHD who does vetting for federal agencies such as the FBI.

Finally Friday came where we had a very in depth presentation from retired officer Ron Shreves who ran a very successful operation in Los Angeles leading to the conviction of over 80 of the areas most prolific criminals in relation to drugs, firearms and stolen property.

On looking back at the training I was provided I can honestly say it was fantastic. I do not see how I could have had this opportunity other than through the IPA and will of course always be very thankful to the IPA for this life changing opportunity.

Aside from the training I was welcomed to the Las Vegas 'Vice Squad' and 'Narcotics Unit' where I was taken through active covert operations, on a ride along, and had the opportunity to have multiple questions and answer sessions with staff.

I was also provided with a fantastic opportunity to speak to FBI agents about how they tackle gang crime in the area at a federal level and was very impressed with the intelligence led approach they adopted, similar to that of our own in Scotland.

I have already made arrangements to deliver inputs to probationary constables at the Scottish Police College in the Lecture Theatre over the coming months, where it is my intention to highlight my own experiences and others avenues available through the IPA for professional development. I was also approached by the Police Scotland corporate communications department / media department who are preparing an article on my Scholarship and IPA.

If there are other officers in the UK interested in applying for the Scholarship I am happy to be contacted at Police Scotland to assist in any way I can.