



Study tour covers explosive topics

*By Michelle Connolly,
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When it comes to expertise and professionalism with explosive responses, devices and bombs, Queenslanders can rest assured that their police are among the best trained in Australia.

Sergeant Peter Henderson, Senior Explosive Officer, Explosive Ordnance Response Team (EORT) recently returned from an international study tour where he was provided with up-to-date information on explosives from across the world.

The first phase of his world tour took Sergeant Henderson to Tampa, Florida where he attended the International Bomb Technicians and Investigators Association (IABTI) conference and the Tampa Police Hazardous Device Unit.

The IABTI is an annual conference attended by military, police and other bomb technicians from across the world and focuses on bomb responses, equipment and techniques.

Sergeant Henderson returned to the USA a few months later and visited the Los Angeles Police

Department Bomb Squad, the Explosives Disposal and Technology Section in Ottawa, Canada and the Metropolitan London Police and Counter Terrorism Police Bomb Data Centre.

Late last year he travelled to Israel and Hong Kong to visit numerous centres including the Jerusalem Police Bomb Squad, the Israeli Police Bomb Data Centre and Research and Development Section and the Hong Kong Police Bomb Squad.

Sergeant Henderson said the National Counter-Terrorism Committee (NCTC) funded the study tour.

“The tour is specifically designed to study and investigate the most efficient and effective methodologies and procedures practiced by overseas bomb response units.

“Procedures and techniques discussed during the study included the Render Safe Procedure (RSP) which is used on vehicle bombs, blast mitigation techniques and practices relating

to all types of improvised explosive devices and vehicle bombs, and procedures and practices to deal with suicide bombers,” Sergeant Henderson said.

He said information was also gathered for the NCTC to assist Australian bomb technicians gain valuable insight into a range of techniques and procedures.

“The objective of the study tour is to identify the best practices used overseas and ultimately after returning to Australia, continue to further develop the work previously conducted by those bomb response units within Australia.

“This will ultimately assist in the continued development of Australia’s response to threats of this nature,” Sergeant Henderson said.

Sergeant Henderson - who was the only person from Australia to attend the study tour - joined the Queensland Police Service in August 1982 and was sworn in on March 13, 1983.

He then worked at the Noosa Heads Police Station before starting training with EORT in 1990, completing his bomb technician training in 1994.

In 1998 Sergeant Henderson became a permanent member of EORT, which was formed in 1984.

EORT comes under the Specialist Services Branch and has eight full-time Police Bomb Technicians and four full-time Explosive/Firearms Detector Dogs and handlers.

“There are also part-time technicians in most regions throughout the state and personnel trained in bomb search and identification stationed throughout Queensland,” he said.

EORT aims to provide a specialist service to the community when it comes to anti-terrorist responses under the National Anti-Terrorist Plan, security clearance searches for visiting VIPs and dignitaries, bomb searches in high-risk situations and also coordinate bomb-related intelligence through the Australian Bomb Data Centre. ■