



SERT AT HOME IN HIGH-RISK ENVIRONMENT

SERT officers are specially trained to counter terrorist incidents.

By Louise Allen, Media and Public Affairs Branch

It is exhausting just thinking of what they do, let alone having to actually do it.

Just to qualify for the selection course Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) hopefuls have to undergo a gruelling fitness regime.

They must complete a minimum of 10 chin ups, 35 push ups and 100 sit ups, then

run 10km in under 46 minutes and finally swim 400 metres in under 10 minutes. All this is done without a rest.

The three-day selection course is regarded as the most difficult and physically demanding course within the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

It tests physical and mental endurance through individual and team tasks, problem solving, sleep deprivation, basic

survival skills and by challenging phobias (heights and closed spaces).

SERT officers do not put themselves through such hardships to simply look good. Their job requires them to have a high degree of mental and physical toughness to support their operational skills and capabilities.

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SPECIALIST SERVICES BRANCH

They are specially trained to counter terrorist incidents and resolve situations which are potentially violent or exceed normal policing capabilities.

A SERT training officer said the unit was the QPS equivalent of some of the larger American SWAT teams, but with an increased range of skills.

"SERT provides specialist tactical skills for the containment, evacuation, and resolution of siege incidents. We have

special techniques and equipment to breach a variety of mediums in order to gain entry into premises," he said.

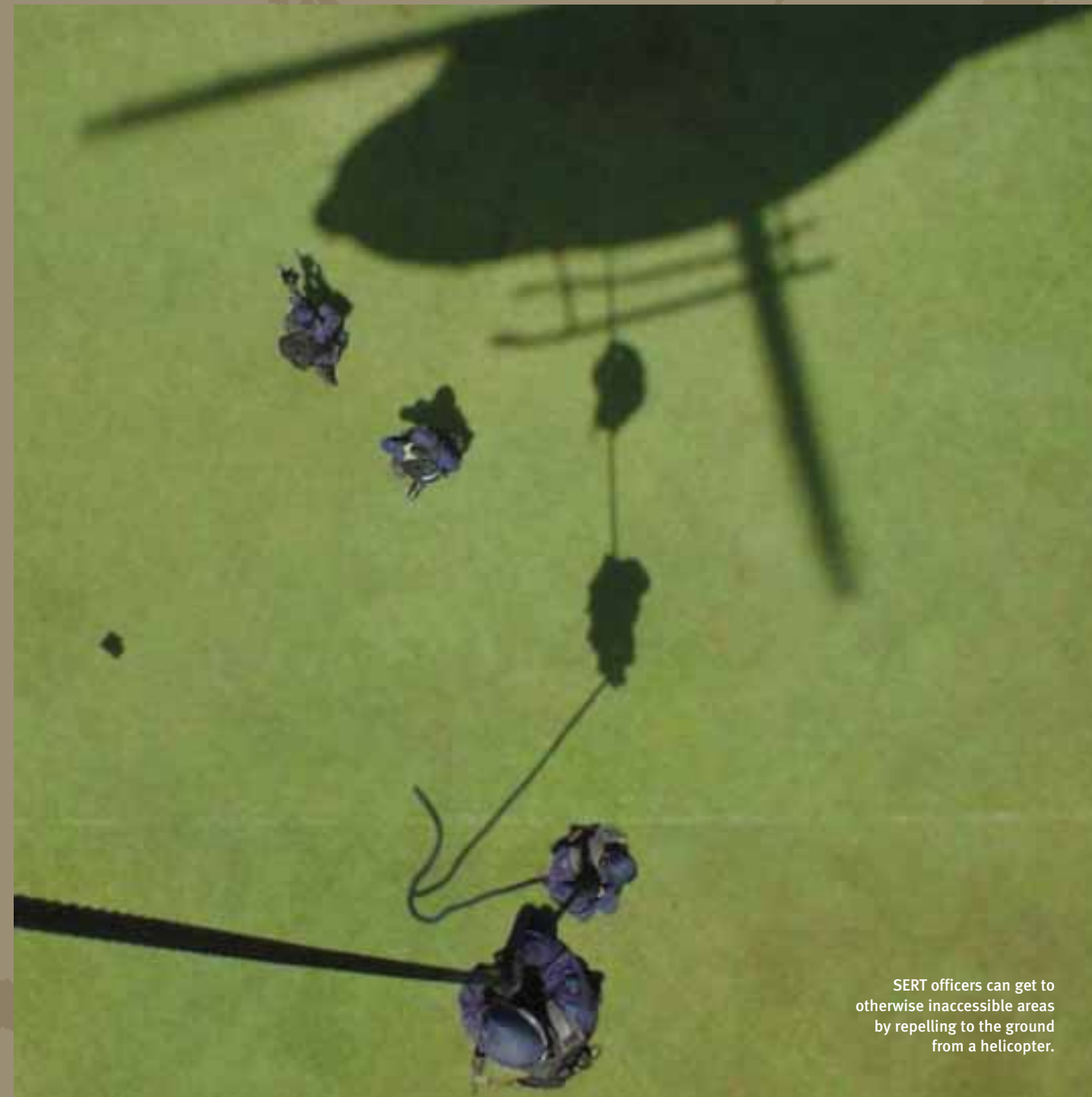
"SERT officers are also trained to apprehend armed offenders, provide support to potentially dangerous covert operations and deploy to incident scenes using specialist airborne roping techniques."

The SERT training officer admitted that storming into buildings, fast roping from

helicopters, water operations and operating in a high-risk environment was definitely not for everyone.

"SERT officers are not adrenaline junkies but just love challenging themselves. We dedicate a lot of time to training and doing drills to enable us to respond to volatile incidents." ■

* Due to the nature of their work, the identity of SERT officers is not revealed.



SERT officers can get to otherwise inaccessible areas by repelling to the ground from a helicopter.