

Training Course goes off with a Bang



'We've used live explosives on these two cars so be careful when you search them', said Senior Sergeant Dave Poulton of the Australian Bomb Data Centre (ABDC) as he briefed members of the Counter Ambush and Evasive Driving Course recently.

This was a three-tiered course which began at the end of March 1979, and consisted of three days of intense driving techniques. Eight trainees attended and they returned in mid-October for the second phase — four days of upgrading their driving skills.

The final phase of the course was conducted over a five day period. This time another sixteen trainee drivers joined the course and were instructed by the original eight.

Apart from special driving instruction by the 'Flying Finn', rally driver Rauno Aaltonen, particular weaponry skills and counter-terrorist tactics were included in the curriculum. Members

from all the State Police Forces, including Tasmania and Northern Territory, attended various phases of the course with the principal participants coming from the A.F.P. and N.S.W. Forces.

Part of the final phase involved learning how to safely search a vehicle in which live explosives or devices had been hidden. This was followed up with a demonstration of such a vehicle being detonated, which was designed to illustrate the force and devastation of such an explosion.

Two teams, under the guidance of WO1 Mick McAppion and Senior Sergeant Poulton, successfully searched the vehicles and located the devices within a few minutes. Senior Sergeant Poulton explained that the reason for using live explosives was to impress upon the trainees that the exercise 'was for real'.

After retreating to a safe distance, the trainees and other observers, which

included an ambulance, a fire unit and members of the Counter-Terrorist training section under the direction of Senior Sergeant Alan Stewart, watched the ABDC personnel prepare the vehicle for demolition.

The result was spectacular. Black smoke and flames poured from the car as the bonnet and one door flew into the air and landed some distance away. The remains of the vehicle, which had been broken in two, were completely gutted in a few moments. Had anyone been inside or near the car they could not have survived.

The whole operation was filmed and video-taped by Sergeant Ron Stewart for future training courses.

At the end of the course, Assistant Commissioner Johnson presented graduates with their respective certificates at a small ceremony at the A.F.P. Training College.

