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Metro's Finest: First class of Metro Transit Security Officers graduate from grueling 18-week police training at El Camino College Police Academy. In addition to expanding an expertise in law enforcement, the officers are now certified to work as Reserve Officers. They are, from left, Senior Officer Henry Solis, Senior Officer Gregory White, Officer Barry Nixon, Officer Marlon Valdez, Officer Ayman Soliman, Officer Edbert Pickwood, Officer Carlos Pena, and Senior Officer Dave Ebling. Not pictured: Graduates Sergeant Yi Pu and Officer Patrick Garcia.

Metro Transit Officers Use 'Boot Camp' Balancing Skills on the Job

By Michael D. White

Staff Writer

(Jan. 12, 2010) With breathtaking understatement, the El Camino College Police Training program is described, simply, as a "non-traditional college course."

But to the trainees who successfully navigated the 18-week program it was "a learning experience in seeing the law in a greater context," said Senior Transit Officer David Ebling, one of 10 Metro officers who graduated from the grueling "non-traditional" course last June 19.

"It's a challenge for law enforcement officers in balancing the upholding of the law on the one hand and protecting citizens' rights on the other and the whole course centered on teaching us how to maintain that balance," he said.

Master the Curriculum

Functioning in a "semi-military"



environment, trainees – called Cadets – are required to balance an extensive academic course load with strenuous physical exercise and law enforcement-related field activities and demonstrate “a mastery of the curriculum” by achieving a minimum passing score on every exam.

Senior Transit Officer David Ebling is one of 10 Metro officers who graduated from the grueling “non-traditional” course June 19.

Seemingly endless hours in the classroom were offset by an emphasis on tactical field training and building physical endurance.

Classroom course work included instruction in a variety of areas including arrest procedures, investigation techniques, report writing, search and seizure, first aid and CPR, evidence processing, crimes against both persons and property, media and community relations, missing persons, domestic violence and other general criminal statutes.



Senior Officer Henry Solis illustrates 'boot camp' environment of the police training program in a slideshow presentation.

Tactical field work centered on tactical communications, patrol techniques and procedures, crimes in progress, building searches, vehicle stops, use of deadly force, and weapons skills, while physical training built strength and endurance through physical conditioning, learning defensive tactics, developing practical physical arrest techniques, crowd control, and weapon-less defense.

“Unit Cohesion” Pays Dividends

“The pressure was on all the time, so it was critical that we develop a sense of ‘unit cohesion’ to make it through,” said Ebling, a Navy veteran. “That was somewhat easier for those of us who’d been in the military, particularly in meeting the physical challenges.”



But, the 41-year old adds, that created an interesting dynamic – many of the younger Cadets had never been in the military, but were much more physically fit than their older counterparts, many of whom had – some decades ago – survived the rigors of boot camp or basic training.

“The military experience definitely made a difference,” said Ebling, who served as class president and was named class Honor Graduate. “The final exam included a 7-mile run and that’s where the ‘unit cohesion’ really came into play. We worked together to encourage and keep one another motivated in the classroom and on the drill field and it paid off.”

Of the 83 people who started with Class No. 65 of the El Camino College Police Training Program, 49 were ultimately awarded their diplomas.

The 49 included the entire Metro contingent – the first group of Metro

Transit Security Officers to graduate the course: Sergeant Yi Pu, Senior Officers Dave Ebling, Henry Solis, and Gregory White, and Officers Patrick Garcia, Barry Nixon, Carlos P  na, Edbert Pickwood, Ayman Soliman and Marlon Valdez.

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