

# The Benefits of Regional Training and Collaboration with Bomb Squad Equipment Companies

by  
**Detective Don Pass, Sacramento  
Sheriff's Department, Region I**

The Sacramento Area EOD Unit (SAU) is a regionalized Unit comprised of seven individual Bomb Squads along with FBI Special Agent Bomb Techs and ATF Explosive Enforcement Officers. The agencies have a Memorandum of Understanding that allows for the pooling of technicians, resources, equipment, information sharing and immediate response to calls for service within each individual agency's jurisdiction. The SAEODU has 32 Certified Bomb Techs which includes six Explosive Detection Dog Handlers and seven additional officers waiting to attend the Hazardous Devices School. The unit has four non-bomb tech fire department HazMat technicians who regularly attend training and provide technical assistance on call outs. We cover a four county area of California.

The SAU trains on the first and third Wednesday of each month. The first training day begins with an information sharing round table in which the previous month's calls for service are discussed. Unusual calls are emphasized which allow techs to bring exemplars in the form of photos, remnants of IEDs and hoax devices. Additional information is also discussed such as training opportunities, recent court decisions/laws, new equipment available and Homeland Security issues. The remainder of the day allows the Unit to conduct equipment maintenance/training, inventory, planning and discussion of



Tactics, Techniques and Procedures. The second training day is usually devoted to bomb squad call out scenarios. Individual bomb squads are assigned a training day at a facility of their choice where they provide the scenario to be evaluated and solved. This sharing of training allows squads to take advantage of locations, buildings and areas not normally available to them and provides diverse forms of training environments.

As part of the overall training plan, the SAU has felt it important to work closely with companies selling bomb squad equipment and has invited many company representatives to attend training days and demonstrate their products. These demonstrations include the preview of new equipment, equipment improvements and better ways to use the existing equipment. Invited companies have included Everest Imaging, Logos Imaging, Med-Eng, Chem Spectra, Mistral Security, Drager Safety, MSA, Cobra Emergency Response Tools, iRobot, Foster-Miller, Ray Allen, Nabco and Remotec. Explosive manufacturers and blasting companies have also attended and discussed their particular profession and the types of explosives and equipment they use.



One of the best examples of this training collaboration with bomb squad companies are the bi-annual training and maintenance events with Remotec. In early 2005 the SAU asked Remotec to send a robot technician to one of the training sessions to assist with robotic training, maintenance, repairs and upgrades that the SAU robots needed. Remotec sent two technicians who spent two days completely overhauling the robots in the unit. This successful, free training led to the purchase of additional Remotec robots within the SAU and the purchase of a three year contract to provide Remotec support for all the units in the SAU and surrounding agencies who own a Remotec robot. Currently in the SAU six of the squads own Remotec Andros F6 or F6A robots and the ATF has a mini Andros.

These robotic training sessions have been a tremendous success, allowing squads to keep and maintain their robots in excellent condition. During the first training session the robots were not torn down immediately, instead the basics of the robot's electronics and the easiest ways to analyze and diagnose

electronic problems were taught. Also taught were many of the robotic operation procedures that Remotec has learned from working with different agencies. As a rule the first day of training with Remotec the robots are torn down and evaluated. If any parts are required they are shipped overnight to allow next day installation. During the second day the robots that need to be reassembled are, and then tested, and we then spend time with Remotec representatives in techniques for using and maneuvering the robots.



This collaboration has benefited both the bomb squads of the SAU and Remotec. The SAU squads have had the opportunity to obtain operation and trouble shooting information, repairs and major/minor upgrades - all at their home location and with limited down time of the robots. Remotec indicated they were benefited in a couple of ways. The training created a good customer service atmosphere and eliminated the need for squads to send their robots back to Remotec for repair. One can usually get on the phone with Remotec representatives and, as a result of this training, now know how to pinpoint a problem and be walked through a repair.



A side benefit of this training collaboration is the meeting of techs from surrounding bomb squads not within the SAEODU. In cooperation with Remotec, we have opened up the training and maintenance session to other Bomb Squads who want to bring their robots to Sacramento. This robotic training allowed the SAU techs to meet other techs and discuss their programs, ways they deal with call outs and to examine their equipment. This has had the added benefit to our area unit in allowing us to determine equipment that we would like to purchase or acquire in the future. 🌟



## Gayle Lohrbach Retires

Sgt. Gayle Lohrbach celebrated his retirement from the Maumee Police Division after nearly 30 years of service to the City of Maumee. An open house was held at the Maumee Indoor Theater on March 30<sup>th</sup> and well-wishers brought their best “Gayle Lohrbach” stories to share during the festivities.

