

Professionalism: Key At Police School



PIPE BOMB—Sgt. Milton Jury (right) of the state police tells school director Pete Wilson (center) and Lt. James Haile, director of community relations for the sheriff, how a pipe bomb can kill or maim. (Observer photo)



EMERGENCY -- The class hears Milton Jury of the Michigan State Police talk about bombs and bomb threats, during lectures in the classroom at Milton School where the sheriff's academy is based. (Observer photo)



SUSPECT SEARCH -- Officer Richard Koch (right) shows candidates Robert Barthlow, Jimmie Cranford and Kent Booth proper search techniques. (Observer photo)

INKSTER A police recruit picks up a cigar box from a table, opens the lid and is greeted by a bright flash of light.

"That could have been a bomb," Michigan State Police Sgt. Milton Jury tells the embarrassed policeman - to be.

The box is rigged so the slightest juggle sets off the 'bomb' - it doesn't really work, just triggers a big flash bulb.

But it drives home the point. Jury and his teaching tactics are part of the Wayne County Sheriff's police academy, now completing its sixth session at Milton School on Henry Ruff near the county hospital and the Sheriff's Road Patrol headquarters.

Here, police recruits from all over the state are completing a basic training curriculum as part of the Michigan Law Enforcement Officers Training Council. The council was established by state law a few years ago to upgrade training for policemen. A similar one was established for firemen.

Twelve prospective Wayne County Sheriff officers are among 37 recruits at the current school. They come from as far away as Portage and Kent County (Grand Rapids). Of the 37, three are women.

ONCE AT THE SCHOOL, they are treated to military-type discipline. They must dress in civilian clothes, but wear a tie. They stand for inspection each morning at 8 a.m., where roll is taken and dress and grooming checked. It's no place for long hairs. Hair must be neat, and closely trimmed; mustaches, while allowed, must be very modest. Questions and comments are prefaced by "sir."

Director of the school, Peter Wilson, explains: "We use a semi-military atmosphere. We want them to be conditioned to it."

Wilson is an administrative assistant to Sheriff William Lucas, but is assigned specifically to running the school. A graduate of Michigan State University

with a degree in police administration, Wilson spent three years with the Flint police department before joining the sheriff's staff.

THE SCHOOL began in 1971, and ran four sessions. One more session was operated this year before the current one got under way. Wilson, who is working on a masters degree at the University of Michigan, says the school stresses knowledge and professionalism.

"To acquire that ability - that professionalism - takes a specialized brand of training that most municipal departments aren't equipped to give," Wilson noted.

The state law requires 240 hours of instruction, but the sheriff's academy gives 280 hours. The sheriff's own recruits get even more training.

To make it, the recruit must pass at 70 per cent level on exams, papers prepared for class and the notebook.

Training with fire arms and physical fitness is also part of the requirements.

THE COURSE is intensive and demanding. The recruits spend 54 hours learning about law, with particular emphasis on the laws of arrest, search and seizure, and evidence. Ten hours are spent on court law, 14 on criminal law.

Among the resource people used at the school during the legal section of the course are Rhea Marchard of the county prosecutor's office, Terry Boyle of the sheriff's legal advisory department and Fred Lavik, a lawyer with a private firm.

Many hours are spent on investigative techniques, including six hours on dangerous drugs. Recruits also learn how to handle drug overdose cases.

The course work is specific. For instance, six hours are spent on dealing with domestic complaints (family trouble). They often are very touchy situations and require a lot of the policeman's time. They learn first aid techniques, how to take

fingerprints, even human relations and police ethics. "We try to break up the long days of lectures with firearms training and physical fitness," Wilson said.

AND THEY learn about bombs. State policeman Jury gives it to them straight:

"Some of you may be called upon to handle a bomb. This is important in small departments where no specialized bomb squad has been developed."

Jury shows the men how a man-killing explosive can be hidden in a cigar package, and what a blasting cap can do to a coffee can.

The recruits are paid by their departments for attending. Those who don't meet

the standards can be washed out of the school. Five demerits for appearance or lateness, and he or she is out, Wilson said.

At the end of the session, Wilson and the staff write a written statement on each trainee and send it back to the candidate's department.

"We are very frank, and we will tell a chief if he has a man who will be a policeman, or just some guy who sees it as a job," Wilson said.

Where's the best place for communities to send new policemen? "We think our school is the best," Wilson noted.

It is not automatic that a recruit will pass.

"He has to make it on his own," Wilson said.

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LIFE SAVING -- Clint Davis, recruit from the sheriff's road patrol, watches as Dr. James Jackson, chief resident from Wayne County General, shows mouth to mouth resuscitation techniques. (Observer photo)



FIREARM INSTRUCTION -- Use the motor of the car to stop a bullet, instruction officer Richard Koch (left) tells trainee Jerry Billiter. (Observer photo)