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Hard Work and Dedication Pay off for Perris Police Explorers

A contingent of Police Explorers from Post 522 in Perris scored a pair of top honors during a recent competition that pitted the City team against 45 other squads from across the nation.

The Perris Explorers claimed second place in scenarios involving a traffic stop and "officer needs assistance/rescue," both circumstances requiring quick-thinking and reactions to circumstances that could turn deadly in an instant.

Eight Post 522 Explorers took part in "EXCON" (EXplorer CONference) in June in Las Vegas.



Police Explorer Post 522 cadets run through their paces during a recent training session at the Ben Clark Training Center.

Police Explorers range from 14-and-a-half to 20-years-old, many who are interested in law-enforcement careers.

They must maintain a 2.0-grade point average, be of good moral character and well-groomed. Perris Explorers assist at community events like the annual Health Fair and Relay for Life, parades and law-enforcement check points.

Explorers at Post 522 meet regularly to take part in physical training and police scenarios. The post motto: Always Strong, Always True.

Advisors Ernie Dominguez and Roger Owen say the high-schoolers and young adults represent the best of the next generation.

"I am extremely proud of our Perris Explorers—prouder than words can say," said Dominguez, who works as a Perris school resource officer.

Owen, who served as a sheriff's training officer before returning to patrol duties in Perris, said he admires the Explorers "overall personality, character and what they get done."



Perris Explorer Post 522 advisor Roger Owen supervises a training scenario in which cadets must search a building for a possible hidden suspect.

Pep talks constitute part of the curriculum.

Former Explorer Eddie Olmos, who is now a cadet in the sheriff's academy, recently told the current Explorers how participating in the program prepared him for a career in law enforcement. He learned tactics, strategies, how to present himself as an authority figure, how to work with a diverse community.

"It set me up for success," said Olmos, 22.



Perris Post 522 Explorers live by the motto: Always Strong, Always True

Builds us to be adults

The Explorers often gather at the Ben Clark Training Center for exercise and scenario training. The site is on property once part of March Air Force Base and is used to train a wide variety of law-enforcement and public-safety personnel.

Dominguez and Owen divided the Explorers into two groups on a recent evening.

One group worked on calisthenics and wind sprints while the more seasoned Explorers moved to a building used to create realistic-training scenarios, including several who participated in the recent EXCON.

Charlie Moore, 16, who attend La Sierra High School and has been a member of Post 522 for two years, said he hopes to use his Explorer experience as the entry into his dream job—law-enforcement aviation. Moore took part in a scenario that began as a welfare check and quickly escalated to an officer-needs-assistance emergency.

Moore said Explorer training "builds us up to be adults."

"You learn how to speak to people, discipline and self-reliance," he said.

Of the top finishes in two areas of competition, Moore said: "It is the result of the hard work and training we have done. I am extremely happy."



Perris Explorer Post 522 members pose for a photo at the Ben Clark Training Center.

Jorge Gonzalez, 18, a recent graduate of Heritage High School, hopes to become a canine officer. He's grateful he joined Explorer Post 522 almost three years ago, saying the experience "taught me leadership, responsibility and discipline."

Amy Becerra, 17, who attends Rancho Verde High School, has no desire for a career in uniform. She's considering becoming an attorney. But she has no regrets about her four years as a Perris Explorer.

"It pushed me to grow stronger mentally and emotionally," Becerra said. "I feel I can take control of any situation and come out on top."

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