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Ten officers from the Japan Special Assault Team (SAT) had a taste of working life down under recently during a training course with the Queensland Police Service's Specialist Services Branch (SSB).

The SAT officers arrived in Brisbane and completed the five-day training course with SSB, which included intense training exercises based on real operational scenarios.

Superintendent Jim Casey, Manager SSB said it was the 7th year SAT had trained in Brisbane and the trip had become highly sought after due to the training packages put together for its members.

"The biggest benefit SAT gets from SSB is effective and proven training based on real operational scenarios at venues completely different to what they are used to in Japan," he said.

"The exercises we (SSB) conduct focus on their decision-making abilities and their flexibility, as both individuals and as a team, to deal with the unexpected quickly and effectively."

Superintendent Casey said the training conducted this year with SAT included close quarter tactics, marksman/observer training, roping, less lethal formations and equipment and survival exercises.

Japanese officers put to the test in Sunshine State

SAT was established in 1977 and is the Japanese Police Agency's premier counter-terrorism unit.

Its central base near Tokyo is lavishly equipped with indoor shooting ranges, climbing walls, indoor scuba diving and helicopter facilities.

Every year, SAT members are chosen to undertake training with SSB, which is designed to enhance SAT's tactical skills.

Superintendent Casey said by using high-stress scenarios drawn from operational experience, the SSB training was designed to test the SAT officers, who also had to contend with differences in culture, architecture, the demeanour of offenders, legal constraints and climate.

Roping activities were conducted at Kangaroo Point cliffs. SAT officers are highly skilled in this field due to the large number of multi-storey buildings in Japan and are specialists in inverted descents and high-speed face-first rundowns.

Demonstrating their prowess, many SAT officers descended the 20-metre cliffs in less than four seconds.

Training emphasised advanced skills such as descending

past rock overhangs, self-rescue techniques and rescuing injured and unconscious climbers.

SAT officers quickly adapted to using unfamiliar equipment thanks to the excellent interpreter services provided by Senior Constable Paul Carney of the Gold Coast, Surfers Paradise Police Station.

Superintendent Casey said during the training period, SSB received an operational tasking that proved an ideal opportunity for SAT officers to observe the planning, rehearsal and final stages of a live operation.

"For many of the Japanese operators, this was the first active service deployment they had observed first hand.

"SAT officers also experienced the 50,000 volt charge delivered by the advanced taser – an electronic, less lethal device not currently used in Japan.

"Unlike SSB - which conducts a wide range of field operations - the highly urbanised nature of Japan meant that this experience was quite unique for the visiting officers," he said.

Another challenging activity for the SAT officers was completing the QPS Academy obstacle course twice consecutively in 22 kilograms of body armour and assault equipment.

"This exercise includes having to detain highly uncooperative SSB role players and complete the tactical obstacle crossing/movement drills.

"Similarities in tactics and previous cross-training meant that SAT and SSB officers could complete this difficult task, despite language and cultural differences," he said.

SSB officers have visited Japan for reciprocal training and were impressed with the discipline, different cultural approach to law enforcement and excellent facilities of their counterparts.

In addition to maintaining close ties between the Japanese Police Agency and the QPS, the training also provides an ideal opportunity to share tactics, equipment and training methodologies between police special operations units. ■

