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# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Murphy Police Explorer Post survives ‘baptism by fire’ *Original team of eight was reduced by emergency surgery*

MURPHY (August 13, 2015) Baptism by fire is truly the only metaphor that comes close to describing the latest Murphy Explorer competition, says Officer Sarah Ashmore, Post advisor.

“Not only did we arrive with half the group having absolutely no competition experience,” she said. “We also lost one of our most experienced members to emergency surgery. Baptism by fire is actually putting it mildly.”

Accustomed to entering crime scenario competitions with a slate of mature, experienced, prepared and fully-trained teams, the Murphy Law Enforcement Explorer Post hobbled into the John Sartain Memorial Explorer Competition in Corpus Christi with a team of seven members, two who had never competed; two who had never seen the competition process; and the two who had only seen it from the standpoint of being an actor at the State competition the week before.

“Our teams originally were fairly balanced with experienced and non-experienced members, but an emergency appendectomy on Emma Brandon threw us an unexpected obstacle,” she said. Ashmore was accompanied by fellow advisors Officers Fred Mancias and Tommy Bryant.

Suddenly, the two balanced, four-person teams became one team of four and one of three, giving Ashmore, Bryant and Mancias the unenviable chore of cobbling together teams based on gut rather than training. The competition brought together some 45 teams from every corner of Texas, vying for trophies by solving real-life law enforcement scenarios, developed and judged by police officers from the host city.

“Needless to say, our expectations were a little modified when Emma dropped off our team,” said Ashmore. “Nevertheless, the team members were committed to giving it their best shot. We always strive to bring home a trophy, but our biggest goal was exposing our new members to the pressure of the competition.”

The fiery baptism, though, must have had an effect, as the two teams brought home first place trophies for “Crime Prevention” and “Unknown Police Call” and a third place trophy in “Accident Investigation.”

In the Crime Prevention scenario, the team of Daniel Moszak, Annabel Brandon and Andres Perez were tasked with advising members of a fictional school board, made up of three competition judges, on ways to prevent auto burglaries at evening school functions.

As part of the Unknown Police Call, the same team was confronted by a mentally unstable individual armed with a knife, as part of a domestic disturbance call. The team calmly negotiated with the perpetrator and successfully brought the situation under control. An arrest for a mental detention was completed and they provided referrals to victim services for the victim.

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The Traffic Accident scenario had a fender bender caused by an elderly woman besieged by Alzheimer's who did not know her name or any personal information. The team of MacKenzie Richlark, Jocelyn Manrique, Ally Armstrong and Diane Chavarria were able to piece together information from various clues.

"The challenges inherent in the scenarios are always enough to puzzle you, but add the inexperience of the team, the absence of one of our more senior members, and the magnitude of the judges critiquing your every move, and you've got some pressure," said Ashmore. "But our team members took that pressure and used it to their advantage. They really showed lots of maturity."

Next up is the national competition, and barring any last-minute emergencies, the teams will be ready, having survived their fiery baptism.

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**ABOUT MURPHY** -- Murphy is a fast-growing community located in Collin County. The population is approximately 18,020, generally characterized as highly educated with a median household income above the state average. With more than 70 percent of the land developed, the community is dominated by single-family residences. City planners strive to preserve a country feel while exhibiting an aggressive economic development stance. The centrally-located municipal complex includes four buildings that house Fire, Police, City Administration and Public Works. Money Magazine has dubbed Murphy as the 27<sup>th</sup> Best Place to Live in America for small cities, and D Magazine placed Murphy as the fifth best suburb in the 2014 list, where it has consistently ranked in the top 10.