

# PICKING UP THE PIECES: OPERATIONALLY FOCUSED RECOVERY TRAINING, TRADE TRAINING SCHOOL



## What happens to an old Army truck when it is no longer serviceable?

- It can be pushed bonnet-deep into swamps, placed down steep cliffs, rolled upside down into creeks, and, a couple of weeks ago, disabled with high explosives — all in order to produce realistic training aids.
- Over the past 15 years there have been hundreds of IED and land mine incidents involving coalition vehicles in both Afghanistan and Iraq. When a vehicle has become immobilised as a result of the explosion, the task of clearing the equipment casualty from the incident site often falls to the maintenance support recovery element of the contingent.
- As MHOV has replaced the outgoing Mercedes fleet as the NZ Army's operational vehicle, the RNZALR Maintenance Support Recovery Course has been issued unserviceable Unimogs as recovery training aids. These training aid trucks are subjected to the worst-case, off-road driving scenarios that the NZ Army has experienced in training and on operations.



## Bang for buck

The Unimog the trainers modified was introduced into service as an operational vehicle in the 1980s. It was later issued to Trade Training School and used to train hundreds of RNZEME and RNZALR automotive technicians.

SGT Colvert: "When its technology became obsolete it was reissued as a recovery training aid. Over about 30 years this Unimog has contributed to the operational outputs of the NZ Army in three different ways, and the recovery course will continue to gain value from it well into the future."

## Expert advice

SGT Mike Colbert, Recovery Instructor at the Trade Training School, helped supervise the recent blowing up of an old Unimog in order to produce training for logistics personnel.

"To ensure the Unimog was still in a suitable condition to provide some training value after the explosion, EOD experts from E SQN, 1NZSAS REGT were involved from the concept phase right through to lighting the fuse on the charges.

"The planning involved in the size and placement of the charges to create the desired damage effect must literally be 'bang on'. Too little and we end up with a bad flat tyre, too much and we turn the whole truck into six tonne of smoking scrap metal spread over several hundred metres," he said.

"By placing a high-explosive charge under the front wheel of the Unimog we recreated explosive damage similar to what happens during an anti tank mine strike. Often the front axle and forward recovery attachment points are severely damaged, or in some cases totally removed from the vehicle during the explosion. This damage creates a real time recovery engineering problem. To recover the casualty vehicle, crews must use improvised lifting and winching techniques, while complying with the Crane and Rigging Approved Codes of Practice, the Truck Loading Code, and the Health and Safety at Work Act."

