

Dog Talk

The official *unofficial* newsletter for FEMA dog handlers

January 2002 - Volume 5, Number 1

FROM THE EDITOR

A lot has happened since the August 2001 issue of DOGTALK. I don't have to remind you about the BAD. Our lives have changed forever since the September 11th attack on America. Many of us got the chance to actually do what it is that we train so hard for, but have now returned to (at least mostly) normal lives. Let us not forget those handlers from New York who are still out there doing it...

This issue is dedicated to the many NYPD, FDNY and Flight #93 heroes.

Maybe this is the time to think about the GOOD that has come since September 11th. Many task force teams got deployed for the first time. Endless training hours finally put to use either in New York City or at the Pentagon. For me, I have done a lot of learning - and learning is always good.

I have learned that we need bigger and better rubble piles for training.
I have also learned that there is no training that could have prepared us for what we saw/did in NYC.

I have learned that we need more dogs deployed per task force on a mission of this enormity.
I have also learned we need more dogs certified to accomplish this.

Personally - I have learned that the "fanfare" has outlasted the deployment, that 8 of 10 people now want to train a search dog, that MRE's are still bad, that I have a great job that lets me leave for 10 days, that life needs to be appreciated, that I have totally incredible friends and teammates, and that the little things are just the little things.

Remember, that it's never too soon to take charge of our own destiny. Time is running out - let's roll.

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## UPDATE ON INDIANA RUBBLE

The rumors you have heard are true. The PIT is gone. In the process of relocating it to a different area of the quarry, some of the rubble was, er... LOST. The Hanson quarry says they will build us a bigger and better rubble pile, with everything we want... but it will take a little time. So, for all of you who keep emailing me about coming to train, you are still welcome... but no PIT, and no Sandwichmaker either. The Octopus is there, and we have a few other training sites. Hopefully by spring we will be up and running with a new and improved PIT. (PIT 2)

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Please forward any news, scheduled events, letters to the editor, or other info you want disseminated via DOG TALK, the underground canine newsletter to Anne Trout at amccurdy@clarian.org or via fax (317) 962-7549.

Anne Trout, Editor

FROM THE READERS

From Randy Gross/CATF-7

On September 15th, the fourth day of our deployment to the New York incident, we had a mission to search a series of voids that had not yet been accessed. The voids led to portions of different structures that were partially intact including parts of the tower floors, parking garage, and eventually into the subway area. As Dusty was searching an intact area of the subway turnstile she approached the train and stepped off onto what appeared to be a solid area, which in reality was the track filled with three feet of water and a thick layer of motor oil floating across the surface. She swam around in the muck for a few seconds trying to figure a way out because the walkway was about a foot above the water level. I wiped as much of the goop off as possible from around her eyes, nose and mouth as soon as I got her out. We were now faced with getting from four floors below grade to a decontamination area. Although Dusty showed no ill effects from the contamination (tail wagging and pulling wanting to continue working) I wanted to find a route that would get us out sooner than the 1+ hours it took to get in. On our way out we went through some areas that had been incinerated and were covered with ½ inch of soot, of course Dusty proceeded to rub against it whenever she could trying to get the oil off herself. Now she really looked like she'd been through hell, which was exactly what we were ascending out of. We reached our forward BOO (base of operations) approximately forty-five minutes later. The members of our team asked where I got "that dog" as Dusty was unrecognizable. We made it to the forward VMAT (Veterinary Medical Assistance Team) located four blocks away where they tried two types of dish soap, various dog shampoos among other things but nothing would cut the oil/soot. Ray, a logistics person that was with me remembered we had a citrus based liquid hand degreaser back at our forward BOO which was delivered to us with a code 3 military escort! That did the trick as far as cutting the heavy stuff. Now instead of jet black, she was a gray golden retriever! Our shift ended a couple of hours later at 0800 hrs (we worked the night shift). One of the staff at the Base VMAT mentioned that Dawn dish soap is used on the animals contaminated by crude oil spills. So after driving around New York City for a while I finally found a store that carried the Dawn dish soap. I also picked up some "Simple Green", a biodegradable/ non-toxic degreaser as a back up. The Dawn worked very well. After a couple of baths and some good scrubbing Dusty was back to her original golden beauty. Needless to say we now carry Dawn in our USAR cache, in my truck and a small bottle in my pack. If you don't already have some readily available, I would recommend you do the same!

From Pam Kinnaman/INTF-1

September 11th I was in Nassau Bahamas on my son's wedding cruise. I had been involved in K9 SAR for 6 years before Boone and I were finally FEMA certified last April and then I am out of the country when our team is deployed! Talk about FRUSTRATION! I watched TV on the ship almost constantly looking for my teammates, following the horrific story, praying live victims would be found, and crying many tears. I am so proud of my team, wish I could have been there!

From Janalee Gallagher/INTF-1

It's difficult to explain the frustration and anxiety of knowing that your teammates are already on their way to respond to the nation's worst disaster while you were not there to get that same call; the call we all expect will never come. To explain that eloquently would be a compliment to the 34 CSS teams and instructors that were at the FEMA Canine Search Specialist School in Seattle, Washington during the week of September 9th. While an incredible feeling of helplessness covered the military base where we were stationed during that course, it was the realization that we could get through it with each other's help that saw us through. Whether it was working through obedience issues, finding a way around cancelled flights, or simply supporting our east coast teams just trying to get home to the devastation, we all left knowing that we would never forget where we were when we heard the news of September 11th: stranded and sleepless in Seattle. (Hey guys, I'm anxious to know how you all got home. Send me stories on how the cross country van trips and endless layovers went if you get a chance...I'd love to hear them.)

TEST INFORMATION

March 16 -17, Phoenix, Arizona TYPE I Testing

Signed applications need to be sent to Arizona Search Dogs in care of John Dean, 2510 N. Longmoe Street, Chandler, AZ 85224 with a check for \$100 made out to Arizona Search Dogs. In the meantime, we are looking elsewhere for additional funding, so there may be a partial refund. Only accepting 15 applications, so first come first serve.

May 3 - 5, Miami, Florida TYPE II Testing

Lodging at the Ramada Limited located at 7600 N. Kendall Dr. (ten rooms reserved under Miami Dade Fire Rescue USAR) hotel # 305-595-6000.

Contact Pat Selts @ stuntmedx2@aol.com

Fax applications to Pat at 305-595-1698. First come, first serve.

2002 California Test Schedule:

February 23-24, Sacramento, CA area, deadline for application has passed.

May 18-19, L.A. City area, deadline for applications is April 8.

August 17-18, San Diego area, deadline for applications is July 8.

November 16-17, Riverside, CA area, deadline for applications is October 7.

Applications, with a \$25 testing fee attached can be sent to: Lynne Engelbert, 19327 Northampton Dr., Saratoga, CA 95070-3330. Checks should be made out to: National Disaster Search Dog Foundation or NDSDF with CSSWG Account indicated on the "memo" line.

CA and re-certifying (CA & out-of-state) teams have priority with out-of-state testing teams welcome to fill remaining slots, if available.

For information on California tests, contact: Lynne Engelbert

FAX (650) 604-7051 or (650) 604-0994

Work - (650) 604-3112

Home - (408) 257-1784

The National Certification List of FEMA Certified Disaster Canine Search Teams is provided by Lynne Engelbert. (Lynne's e-mail: lengelbert@mail.arc.nasa.gov) It is available on this web page. To view it click here.

KUDOS TO.....

Tacoma, WA Results - September 2001

Type II Certified: Jane David & "Kita" (WATF-1), Keith Davis & "Rose" (WATF-1), Nicole Mirza & "Phinney" (INTF-1), Steve Rochford & "Kona" (TXTF-1) and Karen VanBrunnt & "Dragon" (WATF-1)

Phoenix, AZ Results - December 2001

Type II Certified: Lee Dunn & "Sky" (Montana), Nancy Hachmeister & "Ivey" (UTTF-1), Carrie Henger & "Doc" (CA-OES), Steve Howard & "Odie" (COTF-1), Joanne Reitz & "Cholo" (TXTF-1), Reny Shannon & "Everest" (AZ/TXTF-1) and Tom Shannon & "Ziata" (AZ/TXTF-1)

Fairfax, VA Results - December 2001

Type II Certified: Alice Holmes & "Chewy" (NJTF-1), Roseann Keller & "Logan" (PATF-1), Teresa MacPherson & "Georgia" (VATF-1) and John Strickland & "Wally" (CA-OES)

Irwindale, CA Results - December 2001

Type I Certified: Jeanine Gattas & "Junior" (CA-OES), Sharon Gattas & "Daussen" (CA-OES), Randy Gross & "Dusty" (CA-OES), Don Lassig & "Sky" (CA-OES), Bob Macauley & "Orion" (CA-OES), Kent Olson & "Thunder" (WATF-1), Robert Paris & "Sierra" (CA-OES), Fernando Pelaez & "Rosa" (CA-OES), Michael Scott & "Billy" (CA-OES), Daniel Solis & "Sandi" (CA-OES), Deresa Teller & "Bella" (CA-OES), Ron von Allworden & "Jessie" (CA-OES), Bob Wank & "Aris" (CA-OES) and Ron Weckbacher & "Manny" (CA-OES)

Type II Certified: Michael Gaard & "Blek" (CA-OES)

Dallas, TX Results - January 2002

Type II Certified: Ed Apple & "Tan" (TNTF-1), David Brownell & "Malik" (TXTF-1), Carla Collins & "Caley" (TXTF-1), Denise Corliss & "Bretagne" (TXTF-1), Bob Deeds & "Kinsey" (TXTF-1), Scott Kaushak & "Chance" (AZTF-1), Susan Martinez & "Heidi" (TXTF-1) and Robert Milner & "Jake" (TNTF-1)

Congratulations to our new evaluators!

Level II: Hilda Wood--handler and Pat Selts--STM (FLTF1), John Dean--handler (TXTF1), Chuck Mills--STM (VATF1), Mike Agnew--STM (NETF1), Jeff Place--handler (CA OES), Sonja Heritage--handler (VATF1)

Level I: Debra Tosch and Steve Swaney--handlers (CA OES)

Level II Lead: Bob Sessions--handler (MDTF1)

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UPCOMING SEMINAR:

K-9 Disaster training seminar and remote training collar(E-collar) clinic. March 8, 9, 10, 2002 Dallas Texas for first responder SAR, Police and Fire K-9 teams and SAR Managers. Presented by Chilport U.S. Inc., Working Search Dogs and Dogspeed One. Instructors - David Brownell, Garrett Dyer, Scott Earhart, Mark Marsolais, Fred Hassen Cost - \$ 50 per day. 3 days- \$150 2- days \$100 1- day \$ 50. For info and registration contact either David Brownell @ (972) 636-2687 or david.brownell@eds.com or Scott Earhart @ (301) 475-2142 or earhart@olg.com

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ROTATIONAL SCHEDULE

Are your bags packed????

"First Out" (after the 3 closest teams..) on the US&R rotational schedule are:

August - INTF-1, MDTF-1 and CATF

September - MOTF-1, FLTF-2 and CATF
October - TXTF-1, OHTF-1 and CATF
November - UTTF-1, NYTF-1 and CATF
December - AZTF-1, FLTF-1 and CATF

The Pennsylvania Urban Search and Rescue Task Force is currently accepting applications for the position of K-9 Search Specialist. In addition to an application packet, persons wishing to be considered for these open positions MUST live within a reasonable driving distance of Harrisburg, PA and MUST participate in a K-9 Team evaluation on Saturday Sept. 8th, 2001.

The evaluation for which applicants will be tested is the FEMA TYPE II CANINE EVALUATION. The evaluation will be administered through Task Force personnel with FEMA qualified evaluators.

Application packets can be obtained through the Task Force Office at the following address:

Pennsylvania Urban Search and Rescue Task Force
c/o FEMA
PO Box 3321
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3321
Attn.: Program Manager
Or via the Internet at: mpeterson@state.pa.us

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FEMA K9 SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

ABOUT DISASTERDOG.ORG

The FEMA Canine Sub-Committee wishes to invite you to visit our new website! This is a goal that we have hoped to achieve for several years, and thanks to the generosity of both an individual and an organization, we now have disasterdog.org up and running!

In the summer of 2001, a group of dog handlers from Wyoming and Montana contacted Ann Wichmann with the Colorado Task Force to teach a disaster dog "local response" course. Neither Wyoming nor Montana has a FEMA Task Force, but these conscientious handlers wished to make sure that their local dog units would have the highest level of training in case of a local disaster. Ann and Matt Claussen taught a four day course, derived entirely from the National Canine Search Specialist Course which was developed by dog handlers from around the country.

So far, three wonderful events have resulted from this course. The first, and most helpful to dog handlers around the country, was the discovery that one of the course participants was a web designer! Roxanne LaGreca, with Web Works Design, was very willing to contribute her time and expertise to the development of a web-site devoted to disaster search canines and accessible to both FEMA and local dog units. Thank you Roxanne!

Second, Search and Rescue Dogs of the United States (SARDUS), established in 1992 to promote the training of search canines, was approached to fund the web-site. The current board, Vikki Fenton of Montana, Jan Brennan of California, Bruce Bowler of Alaska, and Ann Wichmann of Colorado, were very supportive of using SARDUS funds for this purpose. Thank you SARDUS!

Third, one of the course participants, Lee Dunn and his dog Sky of Montana, successfully passed the

Type II Disaster Search Canine Response Evaluation, given in Phoenix, AZ in December of 2001. Lee and Sky will be able to provide proven expertise to their community AND will be able to interface reliably with other FEMA teams if they should be called to assist. Congratulations Lee and Sky!

Please visit disasterdog.org and let us know how we can serve you!

Sincerely,

FEMA Canine Sub-Committee

FEMA K9 Sub-Committee Report, Continued.....

First of all, the composition of the Subcommittee has changed. Pat Hawn, our previous chair, has resigned and begun a new life in Turkey. A lot has changed for her, but not her commitment to SAR work. She is very involved in training canine teams in Turkey for rapid response. Sharon Gattas has resigned as CA representative, but still very active in CA OES. We miss Sharon and Pat and wish them well. Lynne Engelbert is currently sitting in as the interim CA Rep. FEMA is in the process of soliciting applications to fill the vacancies. Bruce Speer is serving as the interim Chair. Hugh Bouchelle from FEMA has joined in our conference calls on a regular basis--he is a great supporter of the canines and his input and effort in our behalf is greatly appreciated.

Secondly, we are proud to announce the new official unofficial website for disaster dog teams. In keeping with the inherently impatient nature of dog handlers, we found a way to get what we wanted while waiting for the official website. See Ann Wichmann's article on disasterdog.org, above. The website is an informative supplement to Dog Talk. You will find rosters, applications, suggestions for MOU's, canine screening, etc., as well as current news in the website. Please feel free to contribute.

Questions and Answers:

Q: Does the Subcommittee choose evaluators for tests?

A: No, we have proposed a Rotation System that should be implemented when the tests are sponsored by FEMA. Since the Task Forces are sponsoring (paying for) the tests, they are choosing their own evaluators. The effort is made to include new evaluators, allowing for the fact that transportation cost is a factor in the selection.

Q: If a Type I Team attempts to re-certify early, then fails, do they remain Type I until their certification expires, or do they revert to Type II?

A: They remain Type I until their certification expires.

Q: Does the administration of a pretest and serving as a Shadow Mentor count towards the requirement of two evaluations per year to maintain one's evaluator status?

A: Yes, both count towards the requirement.

Q: Should the pretest be conducted as strictly as a test or be conducted more as an assessment?

A: Still under discussion. Remember the purpose of the pretest is to determine whether a team is ready to test. We should be fair to all involved in the evaluation process--the dog, the handler, the evaluators, the other dogs and handlers--in other words, should you and your dog be there? The pretest should determine that.

In the works--

This is really exciting! Many agencies are offering their support of disaster dog teams in the wake of Sept 11th. We have been interfacing with a couple of these entities and it looks like there will be funding for testing/training sites in the very near future. We'll keep you posted.

Another result of Sept 11th--again the need for cadaver trained dogs was evident. The Subcommittee

was briefly tasked with addressing this issue a couple of years ago, but the request was quickly retracted as it didn't fit with the FEMA mission. Recently, a number of you have expressed your opinion that this issue needed to be revisited. As of this date, FEMA's mission statement remains unchanged. We must operate within the philosophy of concentrating on locating and rescuing the live victims. Cadaver-only dog teams, by definition, contradict this philosophy. Thus, it is not possible to incorporate the cadaver-only canine team into the current FEMA structure. Still, we recognize the need for cadaver trained dog teams on FEMA missions and recently discussed a proposal to accommodate this need. Stay tuned...

Last, but not least, we have been developing a set of policies to be posted on the website. Your input has brought to light several areas that needed clarification--the shadow testing process, testing outside of the USA and the ethical conduct of those involved in our system, to name a few. Feel free to name a few more.

Teresa MacPherson,
Secretary, FEMA Canine Subcommittee