

Dog Talk

The official *unofficial* newsletter for FEMA dog handlers

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off the mark by Mark Parisi
www.offthemark.com



Dog Pack Attacks Gator In Florida

At times nature can be cruel, but there is also a raw beauty, and even a certain justice manifested within that cruelty. The alligator, one of the oldest and ultimate predators, normally considered the "apex predator", can still fall victim to implemented 'team work' strategy, made possible due to the tight knit social structure and "survival of the pack mentality" bred into the canines.

See the remarkable photograph on the last page courtesy of Nature Magazine...



Dog Talk

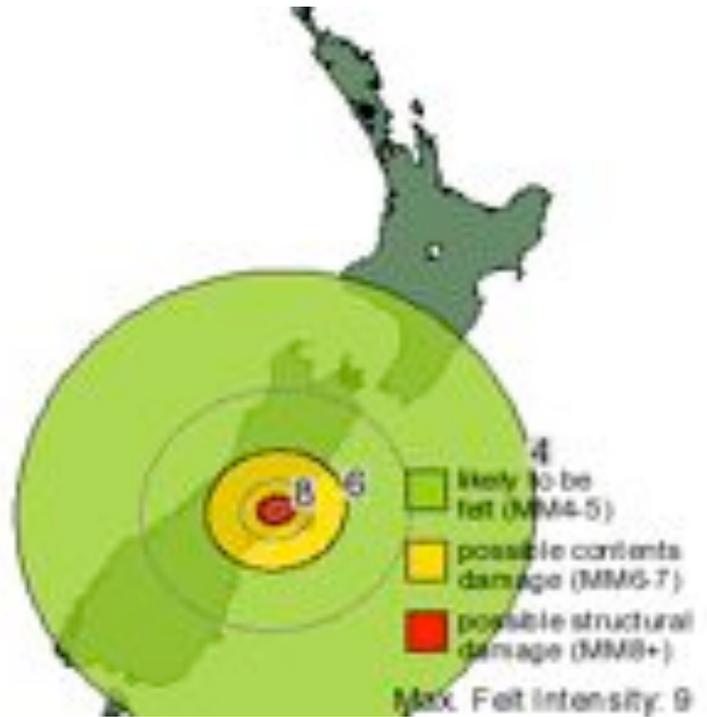
M 7.1 earthquake...weren't we lucky! Canterbury, New Zealand

On Saturday 04 September 2010 at 0435 a 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck the South Island of New Zealand, centered 40 kms from Christchurch and felt throughout NZ. Christchurch (pop. 390,000) is home to the Southern Training group of the USAR Search Dog Association and has the largest number of operational USAR search dogs in the country.

This was a previously unknown fault line – earthquake is one of NZ's biggest hazards with the famous Southern Alps just inland from Christchurch and stretching the length of NZ being the junction of tectonic plates which is considered a bit of a "time bomb"- this quake was not on this significant fault which is expected to produce a larger duration and intensity quake.

Incredibly no-one was killed in the earthquake of Sept 04. Much of this has been attributed to the timing of the quake with most bars and restaurants closed and few people out and about in the city.

Brenda Woolley (plus her 3 operational dogs) who is the National Trainer for USAR Search Dogs in NZ and Graham Joseph (and his dog) a senior handler went straight to the Taskforce Base and were soon deployed into the CBD of Christchurch City.



Brenda received several small taskings on the first day including the building in this photo- a jewellery shop with a restaurant above- there was some concern that people has taken cover under the verandah which collapsed. She also had this an interesting episode with her dog on a ladder at the time of an aftershock- something we had not really considered! Other op handlers were available as required, including those flown in from around the country.

What greeted the first reconnaissance teams were large numbers of damaged un-reinforced masonry buildings. Bricks were strewn all over roads and buildings were missing whole walls and verandah's but while there were some concerns about some large building structural integrity there was no complete building collapses. NZ is a very "English" city with gothic stone buildings throughout the CBD- many are damaged with huge pieces of stone falling off ornamental features but there has been many years of earthquake strengthening which well and truly showed its worth.



Photo courtesy Westende Jewellers
Used with permission





NZ USAR was fully activated for 12 days undertaking a variety of task including building assessments, building stabilisation using shoring, chimney removal and reconnaissance. Operational dogs remained on standby incase of secondary collapse with large aftershocks common throughout the day and night. Handlers performed their very important support role that includes logistics support, cleaning and catering at the USAR base...basically anything to keep the Taskforce working.

Now that the aftershocks are almost over, after approx 3000 since the day of the quake, we can't help thinking how lucky we were and also reflecting on how much we have done to develop a USAR search dog capability for New Zealand. If this event had happened 10 years things would have been very different but thankfully now:

- USAR dogs are a well accepted part of the USAR response
- Teams are certified to a national standard
- Handlers all have to have rescue training to a national standard
- Teams undergo comprehensive training including operational scenario training
- Teams regularly train together.

USAR dog training in New Zealand is coordinated by the New Zealand USAR Search Dog Association. Members have close

links with the US including a visit 4 years ago where senior members visited San Francisco, Denver, Phoenix and the Search Dog Foundation. This visit had a significant affect on the development of USAR dogs in New Zealand and we are looking forward to a visit again sometime in the future. For more information please check our out website www.usardogs.org.nz



Janelle Mackie, NZTF-2 Canine Search Specialist and part time DogTalk layouter...



Some good work by FEMA dogs in the community...

K9 Pierce Houck doing her civic duty...

Jim Houck and The Poudre Fire Department did a public safety talks for school children. On this day it was with Poudre Elementary. Pierce, Jim's FEMA certified disaster search dog usually goes with them on all of these events. During the 30 minute presentation Peirce has to do a down stay away from Jim, where she sits quietly and out of site. After the talk is over, Jim brings her in front of the classroom and explains what Pierce does and while others set up a ladder for Pierce to demonstrate her climbing skill. After the short demonstration of Peirce's job, followed by a meet, great and pet session with Peirce and a group photo in front of the fire truck.



Dallas Fletcher and Pryse



Today Lincoln Fire & Rescue was dispatched on a female that was attempting suicide under a bridge. LF&R responded to the call with LPD to find that the woman had fled the scene into some nearby woods. It was apparent to responders that the female may be in significant danger. LF&R and LPD attempted to locate the female without luck. LF&R then dispatched a component of Nebraska Task Force 1 (NE-TF1) which is a locally sponsored Federal Urban Search and Rescue Team. Canine Search Specialist and Lincoln Firefighter Dallas Fletcher and Canine Pryse along with Search Team Manager and Lincoln Fire Captain Eric Jones were dispatched to the scene. The search team quickly located the victim who was found unconscious. Additional LF&R resources were dispatched to the scene to care for and transport the victim to a local hospital.

This is the second deployment of the newly nationally certified canine team this week. The team was also utilized to locate a missing accident victim that rolled their vehicle near Ashland. The team worked to clear the area while the victim was located later far from the accident scene.

This type of canine team is primarily trained to locate entombed victims in the event of structural collapse. The canines work by detecting human scent in the air as opposed to scent off of the ground as tracking dogs use. While tracking dogs are typically better for this type of work, there are occasions where an air scenting dog may prove a better choice in a missing person situation. Often times it is difficult for tracking dogs to follow a track due to deterrents such as weather conditions. NE-TF1 has 5 certified canine teams.

Through the City of Lincoln's participation in the Federal Urban Search and Rescue Program, the City benefits by having technical resources training and responders that augment the fire departments capability. NE-TF1 has been on numerous deployments including; Hurricane Katrina, The World Trade Center Collapse, The De Bruce Grain Elevator Explosion, and The Greensburg Kansas Tornado.





CO-TF1 Canine Open Training May 21 and 22, 2011 Application Form



Training Location: Denver Colorado, DIA Rubble Site

Entries will be taken on a first come/first serve basis for two canine teams per task force - until 40 spots are filled. If you have more than two teams that want to attend, please prioritize your list of attendees, and number 3 and so on will be placed on a waiting list. Jim Houck, CO-TF1 K-9 Open Training Coordinator, will notify CC's right away of his/her first two entries' acceptance. After March 2nd, Jim will notify the CC's of the waiting list teams that openings are available.

Only personnel and teams associated with a FEMA or State US&R organization are allowed to attend. Sorry, no private individuals, even as helpers are allowed. We can allow for some spectators, but they are not allowed on the piles.

Task Force:

	Handlers Name	K-9	Primary Phone	E-mail
Team #1				
Team #2				
Team #3				
Team #4				
Team #5				

Task Force Canine Coordinator or Task Force Representative Approval – I have reviewed this application and approve for these members to attend CO-TF1 Open K-9 Training on May 21 and 22, 2011.

Name:	
Title:	
Date:	
Phone #	
Email	

E-mail application forms to CO-TF1 Program Manager at rtyus@westmetrofire.org and cc..CO-TF1 K-9 Open Training Coordinator Jim Houck at k9houck@gmail.com

Once applicants have been selected the handler will receive a logistics letter addressing a \$25 fee for lunches and beverages and the DIA waiver form as well as other logistics information.

Any questions please e-mail CO-TF1 K-9 Open Training Coordinator Jim Houck at k9houck@gmail.com.



Probable but not official CE Dates for beginning 2011...

Nothing's official until the calendar comes out, but in trying to secure dates/locations for the first part of the year, we have three TFs who have committed. So it looks like this so far:

Jan - none
Feb 16/17 - TX
Mar - probably none
Apr 30/May 1 - OH
May 21/22 - VA2



☆☆☆☆ Kudos to.....☆☆☆☆

DOGTALK is pleased to announce that the following Canine Search Teams have recently gained certification (or re-certification) as FEMA US&R Canine Search Specialists:

☆☆ Puyallup, WA – October 2010

Handler	Canine	Task Force
Steve Hilts	Daisy	CA-TF3
Michelle Vaughn	Comet	CA-TF4
Jon Barnes	Jeb	CA-TF4
Marc Valentine	Rico	CA-TF5
Scott Mullin	Striker	FL-TF1
Barbara Francoeur	Kairu	MA-TF1
Chris Bichiel	Spartacus	WA-TF1
Jon Gilkey	P-Jester	MD-TF1
Patrick Riley	Pete	WA-TF1
Lisa Bishop	Cody	WA-TF1



☆ Staten Island, NY – November 2010

Handler	Canine	Task Force
Janalee Gallagher	Chance	IN-TF1
Anthony Compitello	Caesar	NY-TF1
Denise Corliss	Aid’N	TX-TF1
Joseph V. Giordano	Axle	NY-TF1
Elizabeth Chaney	Asta	VA-TF1
Tim Odebralski	Nikko	CA-TF6
PJ Parker	Chase	WA-TF1
Gregory Strickland	Indy	FL-TF1
Kristian Labrada	Bella	FL-TF1
Kathy Petrere	Moss	IN-TF1
Gary Durian	Baxter	CA-TF2
Lee Prentiss	Cooper	MA-TF1
Marcues Toledo	Isaac	CA-TF1
Lisa Myers	Sampson	NV-TF1
Heather Sweitzer	Pepper	OH-TF1
Jason Chapman	Boogie	CA-TF1
Jason Cornell	Zoey	CA-TF7



In memory of...Max

15.5 yo German Shepherd

They were perfect little sable German Shepherd puppies and Annette was struggling to pick one out, but when she walked back to the truck, one followed her all the way and thus it began with him picking her. While the pedigree read Bach von Ruckenwald, she would call him Max and he would be "raised on the rubble".

Max was fun to train with endless enthusiasm, matched with a good learning curve and he could move like a deer on the rubble. While I referred to him affectionately as "the most stubborn dog in the world", this quality worked well for us, with him displaying great alerting and victim loyalty. However, since Max was always 'back talking' Annette when he was not satisfied with something, she often called him "Sassy Pants", but if one word described him it was "Heart". He also went on to work Wilderness, Human Remains, and Article Search, participating in many local searches and always ready to give it his all.

On 9-11 Annette and Max were loaned out to MOTF-1 because they were short a dog team to go out the door. Once on the rubble Max worked well and at one point he went into a strong alert. Annette was approached by a New York Fire Captain that said she had a nice dog and there was a firefighter in the void that had not heard the evacuation horn. The firefighter emerged and both had a few moments of play amid the devastation.

On November 16, 2010 Max performed his last service to us by taking part in the 9-11 study by the University of Pennsylvania. Even with the remaining two dogs, the house is surprisingly quiet as we reflect on the dog our Veterinarian says had more personality than he knew what to do with. It was an honor to have had him for her partner and our friend, and as he works on ahead of us once again, we look forward to the day when he will be pushily making us play with him.

Thank you,
Tony Zintsmaster
INTF-1 Canine Search Specialist



In memory of...Leo

4.0 y Lab

I got Leo when he was eight weeks old. I picked him up at the airport, watched him play on the grass, and I loved him. A ten pound black Lab puppy that might have what it took to be a search dog. I took him to trainings, socialized him at any store that allowed dogs, and taught him to sit and stay and roll over. The first time I took him to Home Depot my mom was holding him and when I came around a corner and he saw me, he wagged his little tail. He loved me too.

Leo had tons of drive. So much so that I had to hide toys and stop throwing sticks. As long as I worked hard, everyone was confident that he would be a good search dog. I trained two to three days a week. I went after work. I went on the weekends. I drove for an hour out to a woodpile, thirty minutes to rubble. I hid in holes, squeezed myself into places that made me feel claustrophobic. I battled with Leo when he didn't want to search. I battled with myself when I doubted I could do this. I was just a teacher who liked training dogs. Who was I to think I could figure this all out with my first dog?

It took me two years, and three tests to certify. By the second failure, I was so discouraged that I nearly quit trying altogether. But I couldn't let my Leo down. He was born to be a search dog. We drove out to Los Angeles to test, and my teammates came to watch, and we passed. Leo and I were deployable. If there was an earthquake or hurricane anywhere in the United States, we could go and help and find people. That was one year ago, in December 2009. We never got deployed. We trained together, and learned together, but the gardener opened Leo's pen when I wasn't home. Leo was scared, and ran out, and took off down the wash and was hit and killed by a car. I keep thinking of the panic he must have felt as he ran down the busy street. But then I stop myself, and I think of the last training we attended, Whine Dog, when he got scared on the bus, and crawled up into my lap and just let me hold him for thirty minutes. A fifty-pound Labrador Retriever that could fit himself onto my lap. I'll remember the good times, and remember that he got to experience more in four years than most dogs do in a lifetime. He was my very best dog, and we accomplished so much together, and I'm grateful that I knew him. He loved walks and bike rides, and sitting in the passenger's seat when we went for rides in the car. He loved hotel rooms and sleeping in my bed and he got along with cats. I don't know what I will do without him.



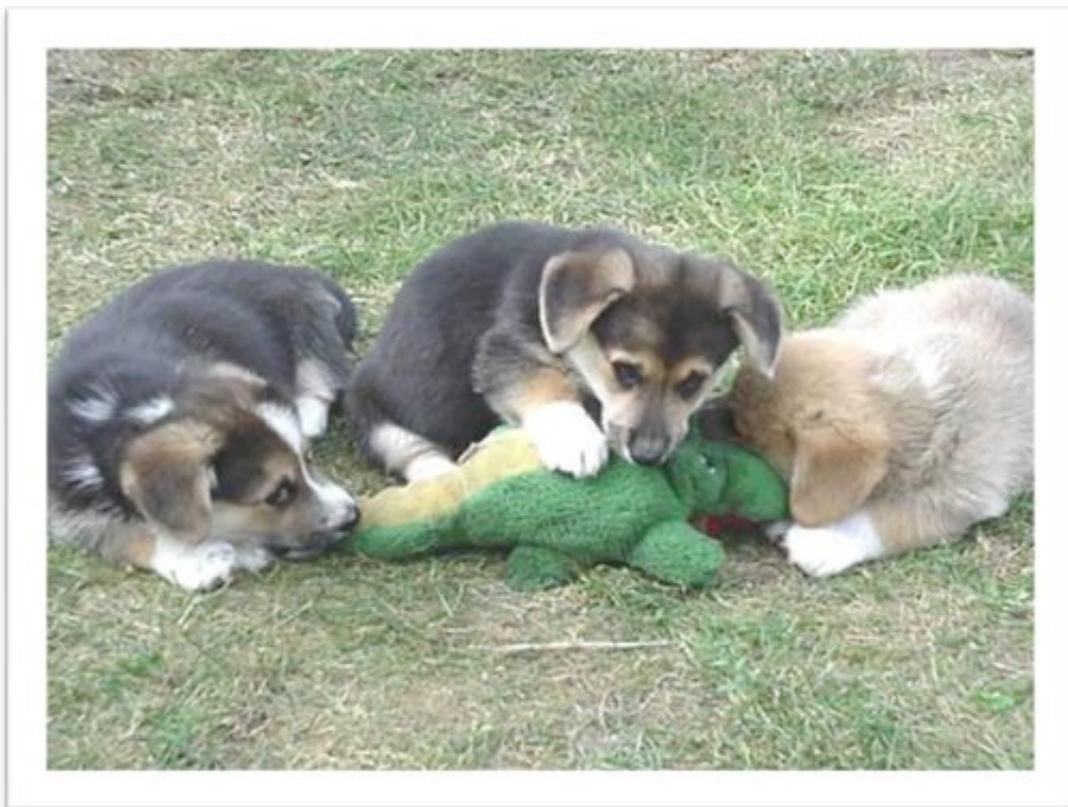
Katrina Kurth, CA-TF6



Dog Pack Attacks Gator In Florida con....

Note that the Alpha dog has a muzzle hold on the gator preventing it from breathing, while another dog has a hold on the tail to keep it from thrashing. The third dog attacks the soft underbelly of the gator.

NOT for the squeamish...



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Please forward any news, scheduled events, letters to the editor, or other info you want disseminated via **DOGTALK**, the underground canine newsletter to Anne McCurdy: amccurdy@clarian.org

