



# Deployment Roster

## Hurricane Irma

*As of the morning of September 8, 2017, 16 SDF-trained Canine Disaster Search Teams have been deployed in preparation for Hurricane Irma. While we prepare for the worst, this is exactly why we train year-round to get teams deployment ready for when disasters like Hurricane Irma strike.*

### **California Task Force 1 (Los Angeles Fire)**

#### **JAVA**

Java, a five-year-old Plott Hound mix, was picked up as a stray by a county animal shelter. During a routine visit to help save canine lives, staff from Bones Pet Rescue of Covelo, CA adopted Java from this kill shelter in an attempt to find her a great home. It was at Bones Pet Rescue that Java was discovered and identified as a potential search and rescue candidate. Java spent the next 6 months in Search Dog boot camp and on November 5, 2012, Java was partnered with Eric Ingstad, a Firefighter/Paramedic with Los Angeles City Fire. The pair was recently deployed in response to Hurricane Harvey, and Irma marks their third deployment with California Task Force 1.



### **California Task Force 3 (Menlo Park)**

#### **ALLIE**

Allie was donated to SDF by her owner in Clifton, CO, when she realized Allie had a talent and could be successful as a Search Dog. The donation was facilitated by Teri Thomas, who was familiar with the characteristics SDF looks for in a canine candidate because she had helped us to recruit Search Dog Chief back in 2010.

Allie graduated from SDF's training program on February 28, 2015, when she was partnered with Fire Safety Inspector Tom Carney of the South San Francisco Fire Department. Tom is a veteran SDF handler and he and Allie achieved Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Certification in March of 2016.



#### **FRITZ**

In 2014, Fritz was picked up as a stray by animal control in Eugene, OR. The officers were sure that someone would claim this sweet dog as their lost pet, but no one ever showed up. When no one claimed him, Fritz was transferred to Greenhill Shelter in Eugene, where SDF Canine Recruiter Kirsten Fulk found and evaluated him for SDF. After completing the battery of tests, Fritz passed with flying colors and Kirsten knew she had found a winner!

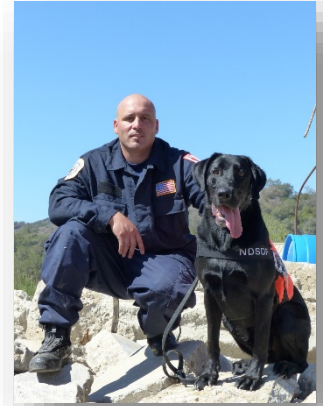
Fritz was paired with his new handler, Firefighter/Tillerman Ed Martinez of California Task Force 3, in September 2015. They achieved FEMA Certification a short six months later and are now eligible to deploy nationwide in the event of a disaster.



## **VADER**

Vader was discovered at and adopted from the Rescue Ranch in Yreka, CA. The staff there knew he needed a job and SDF Canine Recruiter Kirsten Fulk loved what she saw in Vader when she evaluated him! Like so many of the dogs in our program, we don't know much about Vader's history before he arrived at our doors, but he has evolved into an incredible Search Dog!

Vader did very well in each stage of his training and in September of 2015 was paired with firefighter-handler, Eli Thomas of California Task Force 3. The team worked hard and achieved FEMA Certification on March 6, 2016, which allows them to deploy when disasters occur!



## **VITA**

In June of 2014, the South Dakota Canine Center was in Iowa visiting the Sioux City Animal Adoption and Rescue Center, where they identified Vita's Search Dog potential. She had been picked up as a stray by the shelter's Animal Control Officer and an evaluation proved she had what it takes for a career in Search and Rescue!

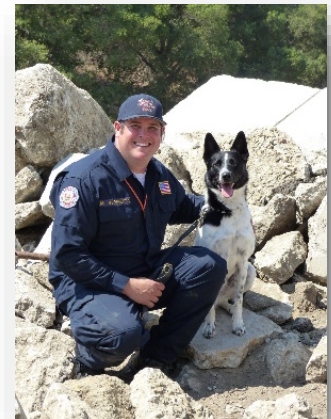
Vita graduated in September of 2015 and was paired with San Francisco Firefighter Garreth Miller of California Task Force 3. The team achieved FEMA Certification to deploy to disasters in April of 2016.

## **California Task Force 4 (Oakland)**

### **ROCKET**

In late 2012, the Sacramento SPCA contacted SDF canine recruitment volunteer Andrea Bergquist about a potential candidate at their shelter. Due to his high energy, he was considered unadoptable and placed on the euthanasia list. Initially, Rocket did not pass SDF's testing requirements but the Bergquists adopted Rocket themselves and we re-tested him in November 2013. This time, he blew SDF trainers away and the Bergquists donated Rocket to our program.

Rocket thrived in training and was partnered with Mike Stornetta of the Windsor Fire District in August 2014. Mike and Rocket first deployed following a plane crash in Santa Rosa in January 2016, and were also part of the Task Force response to Hurricane Harvey.



## **California Task Force 5 (Orange County)**

### **OLLIE**

Ollie was discovered at the Western Hills Humane Society in Spearfish, SD, by SDF Canine Recruiters at the South Dakota Canine Center. He'd been picked-up as a stray and no one ever came to claim the happy and energetic mutt. Once accepted into our training program, Ollie's acrobatic abilities that had him climbing fences made him a natural on the rubble pile!

On April 1, 2014, Ollie was paired with Firefighter Donovan George of Orange County Task Force 5. They were warmly welcomed home began training daily in preparation for their FEMA Certification, which they achieved in February 2015. This is the team's first major deployment!





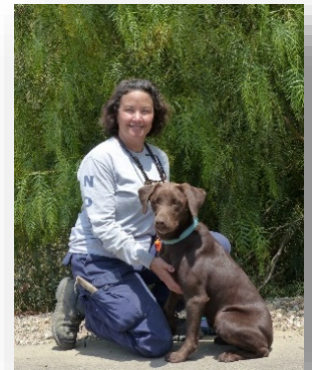
### ***California Task Force 8 (San Diego)***

#### **DECKER**

Called “Oscar” at the Sioux Falls Area Humane Society in South Dakota where he was discovered by Tim and Kellee Matthews of the South Dakota Canine Center in late 2012, Decker had already spent nearly seven months in the shelter in the hopes of finding a forever home. Because Decker was surrendered to this shelter on two occasions – the first time due to a divorce and the second time because the family could not handle his unexpected growth and energy – we are thrilled to have helped turn this rescued canine into a rescuer! Partnered with Brent Brainard of San Diego Fire-Rescue on June 13, 2014, this is Brent & Decker’s second deployment.

#### **HALEY**

In July of 2009, Labrador breeder Nancy King of Canyon Country, CA had a 1-year-old Labrador that was evaluated and in the process, 8-week-old Haley was discovered. It is very unusual for SDF to consider a puppy for our program but Haley showed such great potential, we evaluated her anyway. With her energy, drive and focus, even at such a young age, Nancy generously donated her to SDF and Haley went to live at an approved SDF prep home. Described as “a bombshell of energy” and “a fearless little searching machine” by her trainers, Haley graduated and was paired with firefighter-handler Linda D’Orsi of Chula Vista Fire in September 2010.



#### **STELLA**

In late 2008, Stella’s owner was in need of help with her rambunctious pet. She took Stella to Sundowners Kennel to work on her manners, where SDF trainers began to see signs that this girl just might have potential as a Search and Rescue Canine and successfully evaluated her. The owner generously agreed to let Stella follow that path and in March of 2009, Stella graduated from training and was paired with Handler Matthew Kirk of San Diego Fire-Rescue.

The team trained daily as members of California Task Force 8 and achieved Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Certification on June 13, 2010. This is Stella and Matt’s first major deployment.

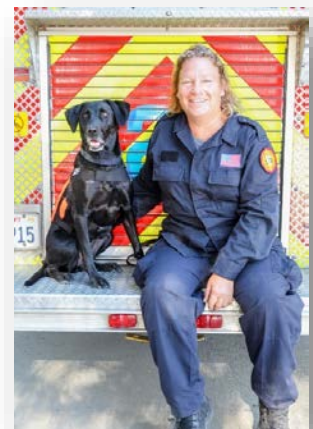
### ***Florida Task Force 1 (Miami-Dade)***

#### **LILAH**

In January of 2011, SDF received a call from volunteer Andrea Bergquist (the same Andrea who found Rocket!), letting us know that she had discovered an excellent Search Dog candidate at the Sacramento SPCA.

Lilah, a one-year-old Black Lab, had been picked up as a stray by the shelter. She was suffering from kennel cough and described as “friendly but skinny.” Andrea evaluated Lilah for search and rescue work. The dog passed with flying colors and she began her training.

It was clear that Lilah loved her new job! She quickly completed training and in August of 2011 was partnered with Florida Task Force 4 veteran Handler Marshia Hall. Marshia and Lilah have since deployed for several missing persons searches as well as Hurricane Matthew in 2016.





## **Nebraska Task Force 1 (Lincoln)**

### **CHIEF**

On a cold, bleak day in March of 2010, a young Golden Retriever was found covering in the driveway of a stranger's home in Grand Junction, Colorado. The homeowner took the stray to the Roice-Hurst Humane Society where they treated him for kennel cough and hoped to find him a home. However, sick as he was, shelter staff couldn't get him to sit still or stop chasing his ball. They called SDF and after viewing a video of him in action, our Head Trainer at the time said, "Get that dog!"

We re-named him Chief in honor of Fire Chief Michael McGroarty who, as one of SDF's Board members, had been instrumental to the development of our program but had recently lost a battle with cancer. After six months of training, Chief was partnered with Andrew Pitcher, a seasoned civilian Disaster Search Dog handler and this will be the team's third deployment. In 2005, Andrew deployed following Hurricane Katrina with his previous SDF canine partner, Andy.



## **New York Task Force 2 (Albany)**

### **DAX**

In June of 2011, SDF was contacted by Guide Dogs of America in Sylmar, CA about several dogs from a litter that they felt were possible candidates for our urban disaster canine training program.

Less than seven months after being recruited into SDF's program, Dax graduated from training and was partnered with veteran Search Dog Handler Greg Gould of the NY State Office of Fire Prevention and Control.

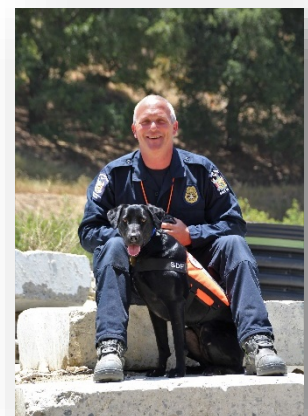
Greg and Dax have deployed to various disasters through the years including a building explosion, missing person search and severe snowstorm. Greg has also previously deployed for disasters like Superstorm Sandy with his former Search Dog Kura, making him well prepared for Hurricane Irma.



### **KEILA**

When an SDF Canine Recruiter stopped at Brightside Animal Shelter in Redmond, OR, staff made her feel like she had hit the jackpot! From the get go, Keila demonstrated to SDF trainers the intelligence, athletic ability, and sweet nature that make the ideal search dog.

Just a few days into their two week Handlers Course in 2016, Keila made it pretty clear that Brian Girard was the one with whom she would like to work! Following graduation, Keila returned home to upstate New York with Brian and the two are since inseparable, working as members of the NYS Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services. The team has already deployed to a missing person search and to an apartment complex collapse. Hurricane Irma marks their third deployment.





### ***Pennsylvania Task Force 1 (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania)***

#### **BEN**

This Black Labrador began his career as a Field Trial dog, but it became clear early on that he was better suited for the field of Search and Rescue. At about 18 months of age, his owner contacted SDF and let us know she had a potential candidate for us. Ben's drive and athletic ability were noticed instantly by SDF trainers and his enthusiasm for the search game could nearly pull a handler off their feet as they approached a rubble pile.

In June of 2010, Ben was partnered with Eric Darling of California Task Force 5, before relocating to the Northeast in February 2014. There, the team joined Pennsylvania Task Force 1 (PA-TF1). Eric and Ben have previously deployed 12 times, most recently to Hurricane Matthew in 2016.

### ***Virginia Task Force 1 (Fairfax County)***

#### **IVAN**

Ivan was given to a family who wanted a dog of their own, but he proved to be a lot for the average pet owner to handle. So Ivan returned to his original trainer, who began to notice that this incredible drive meant Ivan was going to need a job in order to keep him truly happy and fulfilled!

In November of 2013, SDF's Head Trainer, Sonja Heritage, observed Ivan in drive mode at a workshop she was teaching and identified his potential. Ivan was donated to SDF's program and in August 2014, Ivan graduated and was partnered with Lieutenant Kristi Bartlett of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. Members of Virginia Task Force 1 (VA-TF1), the team is part of one of only two FEMA Task Forces in the United States that respond internationally.



***We know you share our pride in these teams, and we are so grateful to our supporters across the country for making their training and preparation for a deployment like this possible.***