DEPLOYMENT SPOTLIGHT:
37 SDF Teams Deployed to 6 States and Territories Over 36 Days

SDF OFFICIALLY OPENS THE GATES OF OUR NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER
Making an Impact, One Paw at a Time

The phrase “perfect storm” is used quite often to describe moments when many seemingly unrelated things come together to create a unique, challenging, and memorable event. Here at SDF, this past month and a half has been quite literally a storm, with four major disasters rocking communities throughout North America.

More than half of our active SDF-trained Search Teams from across the country deployed for multiple hurricanes and a massive earthquake. At the same time, SDF officially opened the gates of the National Training Center (NTC) on September 23, an event that was planned long before doppler radar warned us of the storms.

Even while we celebrated this major milestone, our hearts continued to go out to those affected by these disasters, many of whom will be recovering from the impact for years to come. At our Grand Opening we took a moment of silence to think of those in need and to honor all those who deployed to help in the aftermath, both two- and four-legged.

Each of these events – from the SDF Teams serving in four major deployments to the opening of the NTC – is a testament to the ability of our SDF Family, including you, to advance our life-saving mission. Thank you for being with us every step of the way and for being Part of the Search! — The SDF Staff

From Rescued to Rescuer: 
Once Destined for Euthanasia, Rocket is Now Helping to Save Lives

Not long ago, Search Dog Rocket was sitting in a kennel at a Northern California animal shelter, awaiting a grim fate that befalls so many dogs throughout the country every year. Luckily, Rocket was moved in the nick of time to the Sacramento SPCA where an SDF Recruiter discovered this peppy dog with all the “Search Dog” traits.

Though he displayed the personality of a Search Dog, Rocket did not initially pass SDF’s evaluation process. But his Recruiter saw something special in him and wanted to give him another chance. After living with the Recruiter’s family for a few months, Rocket was evaluated for a second time by SDF’s Training Team at the NTC, and passed flawlessly. It was finally his time to shine!

After flying through training, Rocket was partnered with Firefighter Mike Stornetta of Windsor Fire Protection District, part of California Task Force 4. Mike and Rocket quickly bonded, became FEMA Certified and have now deployed several times together – including to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in September.

We know there are many more dogs just like Rocket waiting for SDF to give them a new “leash on life” as Search Dogs – but we can’t do it alone.

What others see as bad behaviors, we see as talent.

What others call “too much to handle,” we call potential.

When others give up on these dogs, we fight for them.

Because when it matters most, they will never give up on us.

Join the Search today. Your gift will help save lives and strengthen disaster response in America:

CLICK SearchDogFoundation.org/donate

MAIL 6800 Wheeler Canyon Road
Santa Paula, CA 93060

SCAN QR code below

Fidel Gomez & Rosie at the scene of a collapsed building in Mexico City following the deadly earthquake on September 19 Photo: BC-TF3

Rocket searching in Florida, following Hurricane Irma Photo: CA-TF4

Mike & Rocket training at the NTC Photo: Susan Bollinger

STRENGTHENING DISASTER RESPONSE IN AMERICA
36 DAYS OF DEPLOYMENTS

Below is a snapshot of what your SDF Search Teams accomplished during four recent disasters between August 25 and September 29, marking the longest and largest active deployment period since our founding in 1996:

4 major disasters: Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, and the Mexico City earthquake

Your SDF Search Teams' Impact

15 Federal and State Task Forces Deployed
37 SDF-Trained Search Teams Deployed
148 Paws on the ground
74 Boots on the ground
62,576 Miles Traveled

More than 7 million people have been affected by these disasters and are still recovering.

YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US FIND AND TRAIN THE NEXT GENERATION OF SEARCH DOGS, READY TO HELP THE NEXT TIME DISASTER STRIKES

DONATE NOW
DEPLOYMENT REPORT

Hurricane Harvey:
Catastrophic Flooding as Trillions of Gallons of Rain Fall on the Houston Area

August 24, 2017 – While the storm itself was powerful, Hurricane Harvey’s most devastating aspect was the epic flooding that followed for days and weeks after it made landfall. For the first time in American history, all 28 FEMA Task Forces were deployed in some capacity to help with rescues following this destructive act of nature. While there was not as much work for the Search Dogs as originally thought, teams were able to assist by going door-to-door to ensure no one was left behind without food or water when floods restricted travel after the storm.

15 of the Canine Disaster Search Teams deployed were trained by SDF:

California Task Force 1 (Los Angeles Fire)
- Eric Ingstad & Java

California Task Force 4 (Oakland)
- Mike Stornetta & Rocket

California Task Force 5 (Orange County)
- Davis Doty & Jester
- Wade Haller & Rex
- Doug Van Iwaarden & Sadie

California Task Force 8 (San Diego)
- Brent Brainard & Decker
- Linda D’Orsi & Haley

Nebraska Task Force 1 (Lincoln)
- Steve MacDonald & Lilly
- Andrew Pitcher & Chief
- Damon Wirth & George

Texas Task Force 2 (Dallas)
- Keri Grant & Tucker
- Robert Grant & Rocky
- Patti Krafft & Billy
- Andi Sutcliffe & Skye

Utah Task Force 1 (Salt Lake City)
- Roxanne Bauman & Cole
Hurricane Irma:
Just Days After Harvey, Irma Slams Into Florida and Puerto Rico, Causing Widespread Damage Throughout The Region

September 6, 2017 – On the tail of Hurricane Harvey, one of the most devastating storms in our country’s recorded history, came Hurricane Irma. As Irma barreled toward Florida and the East Coast of the United States, additional Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces deployed to stage for a response to hard-hit areas once the storm passed through. Several teams that were heading home from the Harvey deployment were turned around and told to head east to also prepare for Irma.

Despite early fears the entire state would be damaged, the majority of Florida was spared; however, Irma’s destruction focused on Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the southern tip of Florida. Search Teams combed the debris for survivors and handed out food and water, but it wouldn’t be long before some of those rescuers found themselves facing another storm headed straight for them in Hurricane Maria.

A total of 16 SDF-trained Canine Disaster Search Teams deployed for Irma, including five teams that had just been deactivated from Harvey:

California Task Force 1 (Los Angeles)
• Eric Ingstad & Java*

California Task Force 3 (Menlo Park)
• Tom Carney & Allie
• Ed Martinez & Fritz
• Garreth Miller & Vita
• Eli Thomas & Vader

California Task Force 4 (Oakland)
• Mike Stornetta & Rocket*

California Task Force 5 (Orange Co.)
• Donovan George & Ollie

California Task Force 8 (San Diego)
• Brent Brainard & Decker*
• Linda D’Orsi & Haley*
• Matthew Kirk & Stella

Florida Task Force 1 (Miami-Dade)
• Marshia Hall & Lilah

Nebraska Task Force 1 (Lincoln)
• Andrew Pitcher & Chief*

New York Task Force 2 (Albany)
• Brian Girard & Keila
• Greg Gould & Dax

Pennsylvania Task Force 1
• Eric Darling & Ben

Virginia Task Force 1 (Fairfax County)
• Kristi Bartlett & Ivan

*These SDF Search Teams were deactivated from the Hurricane Harvey deployment and immediately responded to Hurricane Irma.
DEPLOYMENT REPORT

Mexico City Earthquake:
7.1 Magnitude Quake Rocks Central Mexico

September 19, 2017 – Two SDF-trained Canine Disaster Search Teams with Baja California Task Force 3 were activated and deployed for the earthquake that struck near Mexico City. A day later, five SDF-trained Search Teams with USA-2 (based in Los Angeles County) deployed to assist with rescue efforts. These teams train year-round and have even trained together at SDF’s National Training Center to be prepared for disasters just like this.

Search Teams from around the world responded to Mexico City to sift through the rubble, searching for survivors following the deadly quake. Together, these rescuers ensured no one was left beneath the buildings that had collapsed.

In total, 7 SDF Search Teams deployed to Mexico City to search the rubble:

Baja California Task Force 3 (Tijuana)
- Luis Garcia & Maxim
- Fidel Gomez & Rosie

California Task Force 2 (Los Angeles County)
- Jake Armendariz & Clancy
- Dennis Clark & Rugby
- Jason Dobbins & Diva
- Gary Durian & Tanker
- Manny Sampang & Eva

Both trained by SDF, Clancy (left) of USA-2, based in Los Angeles County, and Maxim (right), of Baja California Task Force 3, based in Tijuana, Mexico, have trained at the NTC and worked together in Mexico City to search for survivors following the devastating earthquake. Photo: USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

SDF Search Teams (L to R) Fidel Gomez & Rosie and Luis Garcia & Maxim responded to Mexico City from Tijuana as part of Baja California Task Force 3 to help in rescue efforts. Photo: Fidel Gomez

Search Dog Maxim and Handler Luis Garcia work with rescuers to search for survivors in the rubble. Photo: Fidel Gomez

Search Teams in Mexico (left to right): Jake Armendariz & Clancy, Luis Garcia & Maxim, Gary Durian & Tanker, Fidel Gomez & Rosie, Dennis Clark & Rugby, Manny Sampang & Eva, and Jason Dobbins & Diva. Photo: USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

SDF Search Teams with USA-2 leave March Air Force Base for Mexico City. Photo: USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Hurricane Maria:
With No Time To Recover From Irma, Puerto Rico and Surrounding Islands Are Hit Head On By Powerful Maria

September 20, 2017 – Following the devastation of Hurricane Irma’s impact on the Caribbean, the island territory of Puerto Rico and the nearby U.S. Virgin Islands did not have time to recover before Hurricane Maria pummeled the region. Though it will take residents months or even years to heal from the damage done by these storms, FEMA Task Forces, including five SDF-trained Search Teams, responded immediately in the aftermath of Maria.

SDF-trained Search Team Kristi Bartlett & Ivan, stationed in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Irma struck, remained sheltered-in-place and ready to work as soon as the skies cleared. Four additional teams responded to aid in the aftermath of this third deadly storm:

California Task Force 2 (Los Angeles County)
- Eric Gray & Riley
- Jason Vasquez & Ripley

California Task Force 7 (Sacramento)
- Brandon Budd & Josie
- Chris Bergquist & Kari

Virginia Task Force 1 (Fairfax County)
- Kristi Bartlett & Ivan*

*Kristi & Ivan never left Puerto Rico after being deactivated following Hurricane Irma and remained in place as Hurricane Maria passed through, so they could be ready to help immediately after the storm.
And with those triumphant words from Founder Wilma Melville, the boots and paws of over 40 Search Teams marched excitedly through the gates of the NTC and were greeted with SDF flags waving and cheers from supporters lining their path. Our teams were finally home.

Though we were missing teams deployed for disasters in Mexico and Puerto Rico, many of SDF’s active and retired Canine Disaster Search Teams celebrated the official opening of the NTC with us, personally thanking supporters who helped build the NTC and touring the newly completed Frank McGrath, Jr. Family Welcome Center and Bechtel Handlers’ Lodge.

The weekend also included two days of active training on various training props at the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation Canine Training Grounds, including the DeMartini Covered Training Arena, Nutro “Room to Run” Direction and Control Yard, Search City, Carlee’s Train Wreck and Maggie’s Rubble Pile. Also featured were the recently completed Collapsed Freeway simulation and updated Search City debris field.

Inside the Welcome Center, SDF staff proudly showed off their new work and meeting spaces. At the Petco Foundation Canine Pavilion, we introduced guests to our Canine Recruits currently training for the day when they will graduate with their First Responder-Handlers. The past month alone highlighted the critical importance of these teams being prepared and ready when disasters strike, and this next generation of Search Dogs-in-the-making will be the ones to respond when the call for help comes.

Here are a few of our favorite photos from the day, and we look forward to sharing many more with you as teams continue to visit and train here at the NTC:
All photos on pages 7-10 courtesy of Susan Bollinger, Kevin Hess, Travis Mauck, Karyn Newbill, Tony Panzica and Zack Warburg
NTC GRAND OPENING

[Images of people and dogs at an event, with text on the photographs.]
On September 1, SDF’s Training Team passed the leashes of five Search Dogs to their brand new Firefighter-Handlers:

**California Task Force 2 (Los Angeles County)**
- Mike Toepfer & Deacon

**California Task Force 5 (Orange County)**
- Brandon Andersen & Winnie
- Marc Valentine & Charlie

**Oklahoma Task Force 1 (Oklahoma City)**
- Jeff Hanlon & Willy
- Dane Yaw & Delta

From basic heeling to search strategy and scenting, the Handlers learned as much as possible about dog handling in the two weeks they spent at the National Training Center. Now partnered with their Search Dogs, the teams will continue to train with SDF Trainers to prepare for Certification and top deployment-readiness.

We are so proud of these Search Dogs and Handlers and cannot wait to see them grow as they begin their careers together!

SDF’s Graduation includes a “passing of the leash” and vesting ceremony as well as plenty of hugs and congratulations from SDF Trainers, Staff, Volunteers and supporters!

Photos on this page courtesy of Dave Lindee and Serenity Nichols
Straight From the Rubble:
*SDF Trains with Our Oklahoma City Teams*

As part of our commitment to providing highly-trained Canine Disaster Search Teams to the nation, SDF offers ongoing support throughout our teams’ careers. Much of this training takes place at the NTC with props designed specifically for every stage of a team’s development, but some of the training takes place in their hometowns where they work weekly with their Task Forces. SDF Head Trainer Sonja Heritage recently returned from Oklahoma City where she worked with both SDF and non-SDF teams of varying experience levels.

“We worked on agility, obedience, direction control, and building searches with the teams we recently partnered on September 1 at the NTC. The teams are all on track and the dogs had a great time showing off their skills!

“It is obvious the teams have been working hard on what they learned at the Handler Course. We were very pleased with the relationship between the dog and Handler after returning home together a few weeks ago. We will continue to work closely with them as they progress towards their certification and enjoyed seeing our veteran Handlers as well!”

—SDF Head Trainer Sonja Heritage

“What makes SDF an incredible organization is not just the caliber of trained Search Dogs, but the program itself. We always have a safety net. Whether it’s a call, a video, or onsite visit, help is always available. Our team looks forward to the Trainer visits. It’s a fantastic training clinic for us and the Task Force. We never have big issues because training errors are identified early and a corrective solution developed. It’s this pairing-to-retirement partnership that makes Foundation dogs stand out like rock stars on deployments!”

—Major Dane Yaw, Oklahoma City Fire and Oklahoma Task Force 1 Handler of Search Dog Delta and retired Search Dog Salsa
SDF Class of 2017
Meet 19 Canine Candidates currently in training at the NTC

Ozcar
Recruited by Charlie Freeman from Onslow County Animal Services in Jacksonville, NC

Marley
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from Ginger’s Pet Rescue in Seattle, WA

Louie
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from Humane Society For Inland Mendocino County in Redwood Valley, CA

Luka
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from Tracy Police Dept. Animal Services in Tracy, CA

Flyer
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from Haven Humane Society in Redding, CA

Frisco
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from Columbia Humane Society in Saint Helens, OR

Bear
Private Donor

Fender
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from Southern Oregon Humane Society in Medford, OR

Cody
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from Golden Gate Labrador Retriever Rescue in San Francisco, CA

Georgia
Recruited by Greg Strickland from Union County Sheriff’s Office Animal Control in Blairsville, GA
Blake
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk
from Jackson County Animal Care & Control Center in Phoenix, OR

Dora
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from Sacramento County Animal Care & Regulation in Sacramento, CA

Koda
Private Donor

Echo
Recruited from Mohawk Hudson Humane Society in Menands, NY

Hank
Recruited by Sheila Stern from Second Chance Pups in Lincoln, NE

Stella
Recruited by Greg Strickland from the Humane Society of Broward County in Fort Lauderdale, FL

Zeke
Private Donor

Bode
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from a Private Donor in WA

Victor
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk from Haven Humane Society in Redding, CA

Koda
Private Donor
I am Rocket.
I may be too much to handle compared to the average pet.
I may get too excited sometimes.

But I promise I will always be there for you.
I promise I will not only help save lives, but
will also help comfort you in your time of need.
I promise I will never give up on you.

Make your gift today to help us recruit and train
more amazing Search Dogs just like Rocket and
their First Responder-Handlers to save lives.

Search Dogs don’t ask for much in return for all they give
to us. Help us show them how special they are and how
much they mean to us.

For them. For our communities. For our country.

Together, we can give them a family and a home.
Together, we can give them a job they love.
Together, we are the Search Dog Foundation.

Save Paper!
Send your email address to Rescue@SearchDogFoundation.org and let us know you
want to be updated electronically—we never sell or share your contact information!

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