



Deployment Report

California Mudslides

January 12, 2018

Following the Thomas Fire - the largest wildfire in California history - the first storm of 2018 has ravaged several parts of Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, causing devastating flooding and mudslides to the recent burn areas. Rescuers staged in several key locations on January 8th in preparation for the storm, which continued into the night of the 9th. As the hills flowed downstream to the ocean, hundreds of homes were destroyed and many citizens remain unaccounted for. In response, 18 SDF-trained Canine Disaster Search Teams are now at the scene, assisting with rescue efforts in the search for survivors.

REX

Regional Task Force 3 (Long Beach Fire)

In the summer of 2008, an SDF volunteer received word from a friend about a Labrador breeder in Central California needing to place one of her puppies. SDF doesn't normally accept puppies but when SDF heard that this one was from champion field trial and duck hunting breeding lines, we felt his natural instincts gave him a better than average chance that he was a born Search Dog.

Rex completed his training with flying colors and, in October 2009, he was partnered with Wade Haller of the Long Beach Fire Department. They trained intensively together and in April of 2010, just six months after being paired, Wade and Rex achieved their FEMA Certification, making them ready to deploy anywhere in the United States following disasters.



JESTER

Regional Task Force 10 (Orange County Fire Authority)

Jester was recruited from High Sierra Animal Rescue (HSAR) in Portola, CA in 2007. HSAR volunteer Penny Woodruff shared at the time, "He was turned in to the animal shelter by his owner, who said he was giving him up because Jester kept jumping the fence. Jester was on the euthanasia list, and...he had an abundance of energy! He was so proud of being an escape artist and had such a great attitude, that we all just fell in love with him."

Partnered with Captain Davis Doty of the Orange County Fire Authority, the team has achieved FEMA Certification (an evaluation required every 3 years) a record 4 times, which is what enables Jester to continue to deploy with their Task Force!



RILEY

Regional Task Force 12 (Santa Barbara County Fire)

Riley was surrendered to the South Bay Purebred Rescue in San Jose, CA in 2008 by a couple who felt the rambunctious puppy needed a more suitable living situation. Riley was adopted from the rescue by another family who took him to Sundowners Kennels – SDF's training kennel at the time – for obedience training. There, his Search Dog potential was identified and all parties agreed Riley would be happiest with a fulfilling career.

On October 15, 2009, Riley finished his basic Search Dog training and was paired with Eric Gray of the Santa Barbara County Fire Department. The team achieved FEMA Certification several months later and have since deployed six times as members of California Task Force 2 - including international missions to Japan, Nepal and Puerto Rico.

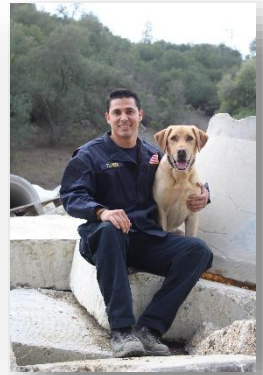


CAJUN

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Los Angeles County Fire)

In 2015, Cajun was donated to SDF by Elise Lalor, a dog enthusiast and Canine Handler on California Task Force 4 (based in Oakland, CA). In her line of work, Elise regularly comes into contact with people looking for help to find their family just the right dog, or a dog just the right place in life. Such was the case with Cajun.

Cajun graduated SDF's training program on January 22, 2016 when he was partnered with firefighter Josh Flores of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. The team achieved FEMA Certification several months later and are now eligible to deploy anywhere in the world with their Task Force. This is Josh and Cajun's first deployment in the field!



CLANCY

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Los Angeles County Fire)

Clancy was discovered by an SDF volunteer who had seen him advertised online as a high energy dog needing a good home. When the volunteer called to inquire about Clancy, she loved what she heard and immediately wanted to evaluate him for SDF's program.

Originally partnered with another SDF Handler, a family situation necessitated a big change and he was unable to continue as a Canine Handler. As Clancy was certainly not ready for retirement, he came back to the National Training Center and was partnered with new Handler, Jake Armendariz of the Los Angeles County Fire Department on September 24, 2015. This is Jake and Clancy's second deployment together.

DIVA

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Los Angeles County Fire)

At the beginning of 2015, SDF staff was contacted by a canine trainer from the Salt Lake City, UT area who had been working with a client's beautiful, yet unruly, Belgian Malinois that she felt was destined for more than life as a pet. The trainer had spoken with the young dog's owners and they had agreed that if just the right place was found, they would consider transferring ownership of Diva into a working field where she could put her skills to use.

Diva proved to be an ideal canine candidate and graduated on January 22, 2016. That day she was partnered with Firefighter/Paramedic Jason Dobbins of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Diva now lives with Jason's family in their home, and they work hard to hone their skills as a Search Team. Their first deployment with California Task Force 2 was the 2017 mission to search for citizens in Mexico City affected by a devastating earthquake.

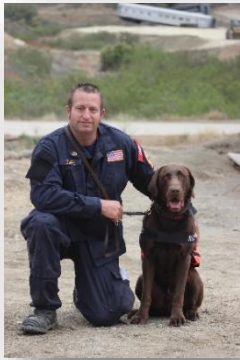


EVA

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Los Angeles County Fire)

Eva was donated to SDF by a Southern California resident and began training almost immediately after impressing our trainers during her evaluation. Bold and athletic, Eva was quick to learn and graceful on rubble. On January 22, 2016, Eva graduated our program when she was partnered with Captain Manny Sampang of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

The new team achieved FEMA Certification in November of 2016 and their first call to duty came one month later when, tragically, a eucalyptus tree collapsed on a wedding party celebrating in a Whittier park, killing one person and injuring seven others. They have since deployed to Mexico City following the deadly earthquake in 2017 and Manny was recently promoted to the role of their Task Force Canine Coordinator.



RUGBY

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Los Angeles County Fire)

This handsome, long-legged Chocolate Lab was donated to SDF in September of 2010 by the same SDF volunteer who found Clancy. After finding an ad in the local newspaper about this high-energy dog, she evaluated him for SDF and determined he was a perfect candidate. SDF trainers couldn't agree more!

In May of 2011, Rugby was paired with Captain Dennis Clark of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Since first achieving FEMA Certification in 2012, Dennis and Rugby have deployed seven times, to vehicle crashes and missing person searches, as well as internationally following deadly earthquakes in Nepal and Mexico.

TY

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Los Angeles County Fire)

This huge, handsome Black Lab was rescued by Southern Oregon Humane Society's "Saving Train" – a converted bus that travels throughout Oregon and California, picking up dogs and cats at shelters where they are destined for euthanasia and transferring them to their shelter in Medford, OR. Sickly from living on the streets, it took several months to nurse Ty back to health, but he was strong as a horse when accepted into SDF's training program.

After many months of professional training at Sundowners Kennels, Ty was paired with Los Angeles County Fire Department Captain Dennis DiMarzio in May of 2011. The team worked intensively with California Task Force 2 to achieve FEMA Certification in June of 2012 and they have since deployed four times. This may be Ty's last deployment before enjoying his retirement years!



ROXY

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Los Angeles Fire)

In 2012, this cheerful mutt was surrendered by her owner to the Sacramento SPCA. Having a long-standing professional relationship with SDF, staff at the Sacramento SPCA contacted SDF volunteer Andrea Bergquist, wife to SDF Handler and Sacramento City firefighter Chris Bergquist, when they observed that Roxy had characteristics we typically find desirable in Search Dog candidates. Andrea evaluated her for our program and she was accepted immediately!

On November 5, 2012, Roxy graduated the canine training program and was partnered with Cynthia Sato, a veteran of the U.S. Forest Service who had spent the past seven years as a firefighter/paramedic with the Los Angeles Fire Department. The team first achieved FEMA Certification in 2013 and this is their third deployment.



JAVA

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Los Angeles Fire)

Java, a five-year-old Plott Hound mix, was picked up as a stray by the Humboldt County Animal Shelter in McKinleyville, CA. During a routine visit to this shelter 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 by SDF supporters Laura and Wayne Rathe 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. After responding to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma last fall, this marks their fourth deployment to search for unaccounted disaster victims.





JAKE

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Sacramento Airport Fire)

Jake was brought into the Nebraska Humane Society in Omaha after he was found wandering the streets as a stray. When, sadly, no one came to claim him he was put up for adoption. SDF Founder Wilma Melville and Tim Matthews of the South Dakota Canine Center happened to be in the region looking for possible canine candidates, and as soon as they walked in the door, staff presented Jake because they'd been observing his high energy and toy drive. He passed SDF's evaluation easily and was formally accepted into the program to begin Search Dog training.

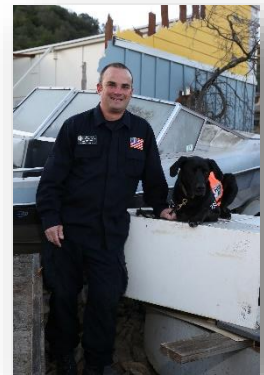
Jake graduated our training program in February of 2015 and was partnered with Eric Lieuwen of California Task Force 7 in Sacramento. The team trained daily and in September 2015, achieved FEMA Certification. This is their first deployment!

DECKER

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (San Diego Fire-Rescue)

Decker was discovered at the Sioux Falls Area Humane Society in South Dakota 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!

On June 13, 2014, Decker was partnered with Brent Brainard of San Diego Fire-Rescue and the team achieved FEMA Certification just five months later. This is Brent & Decker's fourth deployment.



STELLA

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Heartland Fire & Rescue)

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 Heartland Fire & Rescue.

The team trained daily as members of California Task Force 8 and achieved FEMA Certification on June 13, 2010. This is Stella and Matt's second major deployment.

OLLIE

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Orange County Fire Authority)

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 began training daily in preparation for their FEMA Certification, which they achieved in February 2015. This is the team's second major deployment.





ROCKET

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Windsor Fire Protection District)

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 when Head Trainer Sonja Heritage agreed he had what it takes to be a Search Dog.

Rocket thrived in training and was partnered with Engineer Mike Stornetta of the Windsor Fire District on August 6, 2014. Mike and Rocket first deployed following a plane crash in Santa Rosa in January 2016 and this is their fourth deployment.

SADIE

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (Orange County Fire Authority)

Sadie was discovered by long-time SDF supporter Nona Bauer in La Belle, MO in January of 2011. She was driven out to SDF in California and upon completing Search Dog training, originally graduated in January 2012 and was partnered with a firefighter on New York Task Force 2, based in Albany. Although she Certified and even deployed in New York, due to unforeseen circumstances with the Task Force, Sadie returned to SDF to find a new partner.

Last year Sadie was paired with veteran Canine Handler, Captain Doug Van Iwaarden of the Orange County Fire Authority. The team achieved FEMA Certification in 5 months and those this is the team's fourth deployment.



ASTA

Canine Search Mission Ready Package through CalOES (California Task Force 5)

When Sonja Heritage relocated to Santa Paula, CA, to become SDF's Header Canine Trainer at our National Training Center, she brought her trusted partner Asta with her! As a civilian member of Virginia Task Force 1 for over fifteen years, Sonja had trained several of her own canines, Asta being the most recently FEMA Certified partner. Upon their move to the West Coast, Sonja and Asta became members of California Task Force 5, based in Orange County. This is the team's first deployment with their California teammates.

Our hearts go out to the families who have lost loved ones and those affected by this disaster. We are grateful for the rescuers, both two- and four-legged, on the ground during this time of great need.

Thank you for supporting our teams to prepare them for this deployment and thank you for being Part of the Search!