

Team Matters

FEMA Massachusetts Task Force 1 Urban Search & Rescue

Volume 1 Number 1 Fall 2002

Director's Corner

With the anniversary of September 11th upon us it is time we reflect on where we are and where we are going.

Our cache is now up to date as a result of purchases made after 9/11. While some items still need to be purchased none have been identified as urgent or limiting to our mission. At the end of this year we should be receiving approximately \$300,000.00 in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) equipment. The equipment will need to be processed and boxed in a manner similar to our existing cache. The equipment will also be maintenance intensive and require periodic inspection/testing.

Our ground deployment capability has increased significantly since 9/11. We have added an International 2900 series box truck dedicated to tentage, cots and heaters. We have also added two Western Star box trucks to be used for an Advance Equipment truck and Logistics/Medical. Finally we have added a Ford 15-person van for personnel transportation. All of the new equipment is designed for highway speeds and has been equipped with radios and warning lights.

This fall we will put on our first one-week training course as well as conduct a national canine certification test. Our new building will also afford members the opportunity to shower and clean up after drills and also afford members the ability to bunk over on two-day drills. This fall/winter we'll be required to train all of our people to meet the FEMA Task Force WMD standards. Each course, depending on job description, will be from 2 to 4 days long.

This spring our "OFDA Committee" put together a 100-page proposal for USAID for conducting overseas deployments. While we face stiff competition, our proposal has some attractive pricing and our geographical distribution assures that no single department would be adversely affected by a deployment. We are also pursuing, unrelated to the OFDA proposal, working with

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Liberty Mutual Sponsors Appreciation Dinner

Task Force members were honored at an awards ceremony and dinner on Thursday, August 29th at Florian Hall in Dorchester, Massachusetts for their response efforts at World Trade Center. Each team member deployed to World Trade Center was recognized with a Liberty Mutual Firemark Award, while non-deployed team members were recognized with certificates of appreciation. The ceremony and dinner was sponsored by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company and organized specifically by Sales Managers Nina Schwitters and Bob Nadeau.

Guests invited to the ceremony included Congressman Steven Lynch of the 9th District of Massachusetts; Mr. Daniel Craig, FEMA Region 1 Director; Mr. Stephen Coan, State Fire Marshal of Massachusetts; and Mr. Michael Mullane, Third District Vice President of the International Association of Fire Fighters. On behalf of Governor Jane Swift, Fire Marshal Coan presented the team with a citation recognizing their "dedicated and selfless service."

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Photo Exhibits Document MATF1 Deployment

The Beverly Public Library and University of New Hampshire at Manchester are hosting photo exhibits during the month of September on loan from MATF1. *"From Lives Thus Spent": Images of Ground Zero* documents the days of deployment to World Trade Center.

The exhibit at the Library is accompanied by a computer kiosk running one of Mark's Powerpoint presentations and is located near the checkout desk.

UNH at Manchester is featuring the exhibit through October 18th. A reception will be held on September 11th from 5:00 to 6:00 PM as part of the many 9/11 observances scheduled in Manchester. Mayor Baines will attend along with the college's dean, Karol LaCroix. Anita Arnum and Mark Lynch will be there to answer questions and talk about their experiences with students, faculty, and staff.

Canine Testing in Beverly

MATF1 will host a National Disaster Canine Type II (Basic) evaluation on the weekend of September 28th and 29th. Canines from several other task forces will be tested, along with three MATF1 dogs. Certification of the canines is critical to ensure that only qualified canines are deployed. All canines are required to be certified initially, and every two years after their initial certification. It generally takes two to three years to train a dog to the point of testing, however, there is only about a 20% pass rate on the tests.

The test/pretest consists of obedience, aggression, directional control, bark alert, a minimum of six agility events, and locating two victims in the rubble within 15 minutes. Both the canine and the handler are evaluated on a go/no go basis on more than fifteen individual stations and failure to pass any one event results in failing the evaluation.

Canines are also required to pass a pretest within 6 months prior to taking the actual certification. This consists of passing all elements of the certification criterion, but generally on their home turf. MATF1 held a pretest on August 24th at the cache. In addition to our own dogs, there were canines from PATF1, MOTF1, and FLTF1. Mark Dawson conducted the evaluation with the assistance of Teresa MacPherson from VATF1. Support for the pretest was provided by medical, tech info, and logistics who all contributed significantly in the event's overall success. Veterinary coverage was provided by VMAT in our first joint training event. This relationship will continue with VMAT providing coverage at the test later this month. The importance of veterinary support was made evident at WTC where several dogs suffered injuries requiring treatment before being returned to duty. We plan to include them in future training to familiarize their vet's with our work environment.

We also played host to a reporter and photographer from the Christian Science Monitor. The article is available online at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0828/p11s02-lihc.html>. A few hardcopies are available at the cache. The hardcopy article has several photographs and the layout reads much better than the online version.

Mark Lynch, Search Team Manager

(Director's Corner continued)

foreign countries to provide US&R orientation and training. Our two visits by the Armenians and Azerbaijanis were extremely successful and we hope to expand this program.

For the first time the State of Massachusetts has provided us with funding. We will use this funding to enhance our in-state response capability. This funding allows us to purchase items that are unique to this region and are not on the FEMA approved cache list.

FEMA's next year budget proposal includes the possibility of having each team capable of deploying two simultaneous task forces. This would include doubling our current cache as well as adding personnel in certain technical areas. Other impacts include storage requirements and ground transportation implications.

A final note is that increased funding will require increased performance. FEMA will also be requiring monthly and quarterly reports on training, equipment and deployability status. I feel confident that we can meet the challenge ahead.

Mark Foster, Program Manager

Mark Dawson thanks everyone who helped rebuild the rubble pile in time for the Canine Pretest

Pat O'Connor
Joe Barker
Bobby Marcurio
Steve Fay
Mark Wallis
Mike Gomes
Tom Kenney
Jerry Giunta
Tim Lynch
Mark Foster
Modern Continental
Construction

(Awards dinner continued)

The Firemark originated in the 18th century as an indication that a homeowner or business had purchased fire insurance. Liberty Mutual presents its Firemark Award throughout the country to professional and volunteer firefighter groups and other rescue personnel for distinguished acts of heroism. The Firemark Awards were donated by Honorcraft, Inc. of Stoughton, Massachusetts.

Team Matters will be published quarterly. The next issue will be December/January/February. Please direct comments to Paula Galvin at pgalvin@ci.beverly.ma.us or 603-641-4306.

Planning News

This being the first of our new newsletter, an introduction to the Planning Team is in order. I heard it once said that if you picked up the United States by holding onto Maine, everything that was loose would end up in Southern California. The Planning Team is the USAR equivalent of Southern California. Planning includes the structural engineers (StS), rigging and demolition specialists (HERS), hazardous materials specialists (HMS), technical information specialists (TIS), communication specialists (CS), and last but not least the planning managers (PTM). Basically, the odds and ends of the task force.

This summer, with help from Modern Continental Construction Corporation of Stoughton, Massachusetts the rigging and demolition specialists, led by Pat O'Connor, reconfigured a large portion of the rubble pile for upcoming training needs. This has proven to be a great opportunity for some of the rescue specialists to get hands-on experience supporting crane operations. It has been so well received that we hope to make this a regular activity.

This fall the planning team will be focused on preparing to develop the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) capability of the team. This will involve planning the training for everyone on the task force and the addition of \$500,000.00 worth of new equipment. The WMD organizational model will require a number of additional hazardous material specialists and we are looking for existing members who would like to cross train for these positions. If you are interested see Steve Corbet, Fred Ellis or Mike Polidoro.

The coming months will see the biggest changes to the USAR system since its inception in 1991. National recognition from efforts of USAR teams at the World Trade Center is leading towards a dramatic increase in funding for the USAR program at all levels. This will be a great opportunity to increase our capability and readiness. The fielding of a USAR task force is like a sixty-person football team, it takes everybody playing their position. MATF1 has shown that it has what it takes to be a winning team. The Planning Team will continue to provide the best support possible to the rest of the task force.

Alan Fisher, Planning Team Manager

New People

Feeling inspired by Alan's introduction to the Planning Team (and the absence of submissions) I thought it appropriate to briefly introduce myself as MATF1's new Public Affairs Manager and your **Team Matters** "editor". Thanks to Robin Foster for coming up with the name. **Team Matters** is a little behind schedule. I apologize for that and look forward to producing timely future issues. By day, I work at University of New Hampshire at Manchester as a Public Relations Coordinator.

I was introduced to the task force this past spring while coordinating an emergency planning conference for Department of Defense with delegates from Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Over the past couple of weeks I've started organizing and drafting media information packets. Hardcopy will be available at the cache and an electronic version will be available for downloading from the website. These packets will include general information, as well as information

sheets on each team and specialty USAR items or work techniques that can serve as background information to a lay person. Additionally, I'll be working with Anita in assembling personnel information based on subject matter expertise, and will be querying all of you regarding your degree of participation with media and/or public programs, and personal information you want shared or not. Having ready access to this information expedites writing press releases and responding to inquiries.

For those of you wondering about the photo exhibit title, "From Lives Thus Spent"...I came upon this excerpt written by John Quincy Adams and considered it an appropriate fit. The words eloquently capture the spirit of dedication and commitment so evident among the members of MATF1 to a new person. The photo exhibit at UNH Manchester is very moving and has elicited emotional comments from many faculty, staff and students. From all of them, thank you.

*"From lives thus spent thy earthly duties learn;
From fancy's dreams to active virtue turn;
Let Freedom, Friendship, Faith thy soul engage
And serve, like them, thy country and thy age."*

John Quincy Adams

Paula Galvin, Public Affairs Manager

August Training Exercise

On August 28th MATF-01 conducted its annual air mobility training exercise. We're fortunate to maintain excellent working relationships with the 85th Aerial Port Squadron (APS) from Hanscom AFB, the 157th Aerial Refueling Wing at Pease NHANG base, and the Rhode Island National Guard (RING). The exercise was a true joint effort between the facilities at Pease, the training capabilities of the 85th APS, and the C-130 airframes supplied by RING.

We took our new pre-loaded Western Star advance truck to Pease and used the advance equipment to build the advance 463L pallet. As usual, Sgt. "Mouse" provided thorough and intense pallet build up training. Due to mechanical problems at RING our original C-130 was replaced with another airframe and they arrived later than expected. The C-130 crew provided our Task Force with a scenic tour of the southern Maine coast and was also gracious enough to allow our entire Task Force with some flight deck time.

It should be noted that Hanscom AFB is still our primary Point of Departure (POD) for federal missions. Pease NHANG base is our alternate POD. TRANSCOM, the DoD coordination agency for FEMA prefers to use regular Air Force bases to alternate facilities. Should this posture change we would consider changing our primary POD.

Mark Foster, Program Manager

Calendar

September 27, 28, 29
National Disaster Canine
Type II Evaluation

October 20 through 27
Rescue Systems II

October 24
El Salvador delegation
(tentative)

November 16
Training TBD

December 7
Annual Meeting/Party

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