



Fact Sheet



Public Affairs Division - Washington DC

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THE SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAM (SRT) CANINE PROGRAM

The Special Response Team (SRT) Canine Program is the utilization of hand-picked canines and handlers trained in areas which support the SRT mission of reducing violent crime and protecting the public. The SRT canine teams are trained and certified in the following six areas:

- Obedience
- Building Search
- Area Search
- Tracking
- Evidence Search
- Aggression Control
- One tactical canine (Ike) is also trained and certified in explosives detection

There are eight SRT-trained tactical canine teams throughout the country with ATF special agents/SRT operators acting as the handlers. The SRT program trains its canines in-house, and utilizes a national association, with no ties to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) as the certifying body. The certifying entity is the North American Police Work Dogs Association (NAPWDA).

The primary goal of the SRT tactical canine program is to provide each SRT with an additional tool (the canine) to locate and/or apprehend hidden or fleeing felons and suspects.

Since 2000, the ATF SRT program has trained a total of fifteen canine teams (five of which are retired, one passed away in 2004, and one canine killed in the line of duty in December, 2012). These dogs and their SRT-trained handlers are assigned to teams based in the following core cities:

- Detroit, Mich.
- Sterling, Va.
- Miami, Fla.
- Dallas, Texas
- Los Angeles, Calif.

In 2000, the first full-time canine team successfully completed an eight-week training program which culminated in a certification of the first SRT canine, Boomer, as

a “patrol” dog. Throughout the history of the program, it evolved with the formal institution of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), a formal training lesson plan and program, a formal maintenance training program for the remainder of the canines working life, and the establishment of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) as the primary training base in Brunswick, Ga.

Training at FLETC offers thousands of acres of secured tracking areas, more than 40 buildings with varied floor plans for building search training, an explosives range for neutrality to NFDD and gunfire training, a counterterrorism training center utilized for both tracking and building searches (including small crawl spaces and attics), and secure indoor and outdoor obedience training locations. The SRT canine teams also routinely train with FBI’s Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) canine teams in Quantico, as well as military canine teams throughout the country.

In the summer of 2014, the SRT Canine Program will be retiring one of its brave dogs after five years of high-impact work with the Los Angeles SRT (the dog will retire to the handler's family) and initiating the training of two young dogs that will be assigned with their handlers to the Los Angeles and Miami Special Response Teams.

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