



## News Release



Washington, Field Division – Washington, D.C.

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### **ATF CONTINUES TO PUT THE BITE ON EXPLOSIVES**

WASHINGTON — Carl Vasilko, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Washington Field Division, announces the addition of a new explosives detection canine to ATF's enforcement team in Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Christie, a 15-month-old black Labrador Retriever, is fresh out of training with her partner, veteran Special Agent Canine Handler (SACH) Richard Clabeaux. Christie is the second ATF explosives canine for SACH Clabeaux as she replaces Archie who recently retired after nine years of service to ATF.

Christie recently completed a rigorous 16-week training program at ATF's National Canine Academy in Front Royal, Va., and SACH Clabeaux joined her for the last 10 weeks where they trained as a team. The National Canine Academy's trainers worked with Christie for the first six weeks of her training, teaching her to detect trace amounts of all types of low explosives, such as smokeless and black powders, and high explosives, such as dynamite and TNT. All ATF canine handlers are special agents and most are specifically trained as certified explosives specialists, having specialized training and experience in post blast scenes and explosives recognition, handling, and disposal.

ATF trains both explosives and accelerant detection canines. The dogs are trained for a variety of federal law enforcement agencies, including the FBI, and the U.S. Marshals Service as well as state and local law enforcement agencies. ATF has also trained and certified several hundred dogs being used in foreign countries. The explosives detection canines are trained and capable of finding improvised explosive devices, commercial and military explosives, explosives residue, post blast debris, firearms, ammunition, spent shell casings, and fireworks. ATF-trained canines provide law enforcement investigators with a very important tool in explosives, firearms, and arson investigations. Once the dogs are trained and certified, they undergo a re-certification process each year.

While Christie is now out on the front lines, Archie has not been forgotten. Although he doesn't receive a federal pension, he still lives with the Clabeaux family. During his years of service with ATF, Archie worked on many notable investigations in Washington, D.C., and in the Virginia area involving illegal fireworks, explosives, bomb threats, and firearms related crime scenes where he detected both shell casings and firearms. Most notably, Archie located a firearm in a densely wooded area in Herndon, Va., which had been used in a homicide 13 months earlier. In addition, he was assigned to assist with providing security at many high profile events such as three Presidential Inaugurations, two G-8 Conferences, the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of

Jamestown, Super Bowl XLIV, and most honored to work his first detail at the opening of the WWII Memorial ceremonies in 2004. Archie was well known throughout northern Virginia and Washington, .D.C, for his 100's of demonstrations he provided to local schools, community groups, and to other law enforcement agencies.

ATF's canine program, which began in 1986, uses only Labrador Retrievers. The dogs are supplied by the Guiding Eyes for the Blind, the Guide Dog Foundation, and Puppies Behind Bars. Archie was bred through the Guide Dog Foundation, while Christie was bred and raised by the Puppies Behind Bars organization.

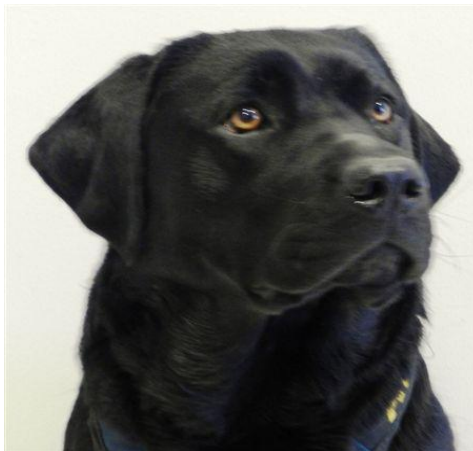
ATF's canines, both explosives detection and accelerant detection, are trained by using the food-reward system. Due of their tremendous inherent sense of smell, the canines are first taught to identify the base odors from explosives or accelerants. They are then taught to sit down when they smell the base odor. When a dog properly identifies an explosive or accelerant odor and sits, it is rewarded with food.

ATF-trained dogs have been used successfully in a variety of situations including bomb and gun investigations, as well as in the more traditional protective search and sweep responsibilities. SACH Clabeaux has been with ATF for 22 years, and has been a canine handler since 2004. He and Christie will work primarily on explosives incidents but will also assist with illegal firearms trafficking investigations and search warrants where Christie will be able to sniff out illegal firearms.

To read more about Washington Field Division investigations, go to [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov) click on the Field Divisions tab and click on Washington and press releases.



Archie



Christie

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