

Search Dog Foundation Delivers Five Trained Dogs

Oklahoma City firefighters received five dogs trained in search-and-rescue missions.

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In their continuing effort to provide various government agencies with search-and-rescue dogs, the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation (SDF) has added the Oklahoma City Fire Department to the growing list of organizations equipped with this indispensable resource. Five Oklahoma City firefighters completed the SDF's Handlers' Course in California and are currently working towards their Oklahoma state certification.

December 4th marked the official welcome of the dogs to the department's team as they were presented with the ceremonial Search Dog vest. Not only is this the largest training group in the history of the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation, it harkens back to one of the biggest events that lead to the SDF's formation.

Upon attaining her FEMA certification as a Canine Search Specialist, Wilma Melville participated in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing with her dog Murphy to look for survivors. Seeing the carnage made her recognize the importance of and need for having search dog-handler teams across the nation. She then took it upon herself to found the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation. By partnering with canine trainer Pluis Davern, Melville has helped create 65 SDF teams across the nation, and that number continues to increase each year.

By taking shelter dogs and training them in search-and-rescue techniques, the SDF can provide an effective tool to aid in finding survivors of catastrophic events. With their keen sense and ability to work in adverse and dangerous conditions, search-and-rescue dogs can find survivors quickly and safely.