

Dogs, Handlers Complete ATF Training

Seven canine teams graduate from the Explosives Detection Canine Program.

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The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives graduated seven canine teams that successfully completed the 10-week training course at the ATF Canine Training Center in Front Royal, Va.

Among the human graduates were federal officers from the CIA, Department of Defense, U.S. Marshals Service, and the Federal Protective Service. ATF canine trainers also spent six weeks "imprinting" the dogs, giving them the capability to locate 19,000 explosive odors.

The handlers and their dogs learned how to search for explosives in vehicles, schools, train stations, concert venues, warehouses, and retail stores. The dogs were also trained to detect firearms and ammunition. To graduate, each canine must pass a test conducted by a forensic chemist, with 100 percent accuracy.

The teams will be deployed throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and other parts of the country, where they will be used for criminal investigations, protective search and sweep operations, and safeguarding national events. "These dedicated students have been training for seven days a week since January 7," says ATF acting director Michael Sullivan. "They and their highly trained canine partners are now prepared to use their skills to protect the public and prevent terrorism."

For more information on ATF's Explosives Detection Canine Program, visit www.atf.gov