



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Tampa Field Division

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FLORIDA CANINE TEAMS RECEIVE NATIONAL CERTIFICATION IN BOMB DETECTION

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. – Special Agent in Charge Virginia O’Brien of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Tampa Field Division and Deputy Chief Michael P. Hayes, ATF National Center for Explosives Training and Research (NCETR) today announce the graduation of thirteen law-enforcement canine teams from the ATF “National Canine Initiative Course”.

The week long training was conducted by the ATF Canine Training Branch and hosted by the ATF Tampa Field Division and was held at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg. It is the first time that ATF has offered this training away from the ATF Canine Training Center in Front Royal, Virginia. The training was specifically brought to the Tampa Bay area to help local canine teams prepare for Super Bowl XLIII and is the third canine training session held in the Tampa Bay area in recent months. The National Canine Initiative Course is only available to those canine teams that have previously completed the ATF National Odor Recognition Course and upon completion of this training the canine teams are nationally certified through the U.S. Department of Justice.

These thirteen canine teams that have graduated from this course now join an elite group of only 78 canine teams from around the United States to hold this prestigious certification. The training included instruction for the canine teams in relation to conducting preventative sweeps, searching crime scenes and searching post blast scenes. The canine teams also spent many hours honing their skills and abilities in locating and identifying firearms, shell casings and explosive materials that might be found during a sweep or search.

“This training has helped prepare our local canine teams for Super Bowl XLIII, and the people of Tampa should feel safe knowing that we have some of the best trained explosive detection canine teams in the country working in our community”, said, Virginia O’Brien, Special Agent in Charge of the ATF Tampa Field Division. The lead instructor for the course, ATF Canine Instructor Tim Dawson said “the canine teams that

graduated this course worked extremely hard this week and are all highly qualified and competent in detecting explosive materials”.

The canine teams that graduated the course were from the Tampa Police Department, four teams; the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office, three teams; the Lee County Sheriff’s Office, three teams; the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office, two teams and the Port St. Lucie Police Department, one team