



ATF News

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

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LOCAL ATF AGENT AND K-9 HELPING TO KEEP SUPER BOWL XLII SAFE

GLENDALE, Ariz.- When the phone rings for assistance, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Special Agent Kent Plemons and his partner “Virgil” of the ATF Seattle Field Division are ready to respond where needed. This assignment happens to be providing assistance at Super Bowl XLII (SBXLII) in Glendale and the greater Phoenix area. The law enforcement duo is one of several unique teams of federal, state and local canine teams who are working hand-in-paw helping to keep the events safe.

Special Agent in Charge William Newell of the ATF Phoenix Field Division stated, “We are pleased to have the expertise of Special Agent Plemons and Virgil in Phoenix helping make this historic event a safe one for fans, players, league officials, the media and all people who are coming here for this year’s Super Bowl festivities.”

Agent Plemons and Virgil, a black Labrador retriever, have been partners for over 18 months and work together to detect the presence of explosives, firearms and ammunition in criminal investigations and high-profile security events where their expertise is needed. They were called to assist at this year’s Super Bowl to help locate any type of explosives, which may be in close proximity to the University of Phoenix Stadium or any other venues relating to the big game.

ATF has used its explosives detecting canines at other special events including the Republican and Democratic National Conventions, the G-8, the World Series, the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics and of course, the Super Bowls. Agent Plemons and Virgil joined the team as part of ATF’s Explosives Detection Canine Program after having graduated a 10-week training program at the ATF Canine Training Center in Front Royal, Va.

ATF’s 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 Canine Companions for Independence. These specialty canines are trained to detect a variety of explosive compounds and materials that could be used in an explosive device. The canines can also detect firearms and ammunition and are also used in the more traditional protective search and sweep operations.

The ATF Explosive Detection Canine Program training is available, free of charge, to qualifying state and local law enforcement agencies.

ATF has trained over 500 canines nationwide and overseas. Additionally, ATF trains accelerant detection canines which are used in arson investigations. If you would like more information about the ATF's Explosive Detection Canine Program or ATF's Accelerant Detection Program visit www.atf.gov.

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