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ATF SPECIAL RESPONSE TEAMS

Purpose

The Special Response Teams (SRT) of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) were formed to manage the inherent risk associated with the investigation and apprehension of some of the country's most violent criminals.

Goals

The SRT is critical to ATF's mission to reduce violent crime. The teams protect the bureau's agents, other law enforcement officers, subjects and the public during the course of criminal investigations in highly sensitive or dangerous situations that confront violent criminals. The SRT components respond to these high-risk law enforcement situations that involve arrest and search warrants, home invasion, robberies, buy-busts, undercover, protection details and high-risk vehicle stops and surveillances throughout the country. The SRT has supported multi-agency operations involving outlaw motorcycle organizations, terrorist organizations, and organized crime groups.

SRT Composition

The SRT averages nearly 150 activations a year. The teams are located in Dallas, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami and Washington, D.C. The five teams consist of 148 full- and part-time members. Most team activations include the following ATF personnel and resources:

- Tactical operators
- Crisis negotiators (ATF has 55 crisis negotiators trained and available to support all SRT operations. The negotiators, recruited from the ranks of ATF agents, specialize in barricade and hostage incidents and are trained to deal with mentally unstable suspects.)

- Medics (ATF's Operational Medic Program or OMP consists of 70 tactical medics located in all 25 field divisions and headquarters. The OMP is made up of special agents who are specially trained to provide basic and advanced medical support during enforcement and training operations for the SRT and field divisions. The OMP also prepares a Medical Threat Assessment in advance of enforcement and training operations; and upon request the OMP provides basic CPR/first aid/trauma training to agents in the field.)
- SRT Tactical Canine Program is a unique asset developed by ATF. Most law enforcement agencies use canines in a police/security role. ATF goes beyond this by requiring its dogs to not only be aggressive when required, but to be social as well. The SRT canines work in conjunction with the tactical teams to clear buildings and other target locations, perform searches for hidden suspects, conduct tracking and large area search missions, and as a last resort, attack threats. SRT canines are certified by the International Police and Working Dog Association as both police and working dogs. ATF has three active tactical canines and two in training.

Strategy

The SRT strategy uses regionally based teams to conduct high-risk ATF tactical operations within the capabilities of the SRT program. The teams:

- Provide options to increase the likelihood of safe and efficient resolutions to life-endangering situations.
- Develop tactics, operating procedures, and contingency plans combined with the appropriate equipment and personnel (ATF tactical, crisis negotiators and medics) to provide the necessary support during high-risk ATF operations.
- Provide field divisions and the ATF Academy with a cadre of tactical instructors to increase ATF's training and overall capabilities.

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