

# The 2007 North American Police Work Dog Association's National Explosives Detection Canine Workshop Tampa, Florida by Doug White, Region VI

As the sun came up on the first morning of the seminar, the temperature read seventy-five degrees; perfect weather for training in January. The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office hosted the North American Police Work Dog Association's (NAPWDA) National Explosives Detection Canine Workshop in Tampa, Florida, held January 8-12, 2007. The attendees of this workshop not only enjoyed the Tampa Bay area during the winter, but also trained and certified at numerous venues during this week-long event.

First, it is important to mention that this workshop, and its many months of planning, would not have been successful without the dedication of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Canine Section, Crime Prevention Bureau and Training Division. Also, many thanks go to the support from the canine, law enforcement, explosives and local industry. This workshop's sponsors included: Armor Holdings and Law Enforcement Supply of Tampa who hosted hospitality events and donated items from their entire product line; Protech tactical shirts to Safariland Holsters and even a set of K9 body armor. The other sponsors that helped make this workshop first class were Coca Cola, NABCO, Oakley, American Aluminum, XtremeCrabWear.com and Ace K9.

On Monday morning, thirty nine handlers and their canine partners converged on the Ramada Plantation House in Plant City, Florida. These handlers represented twenty eight agencies from around the country and all levels of law enforcement from the CIA to Winston Salem PD. Who wouldn't want to train in Florida during the winter?

During registration, handlers enjoyed refreshments and a vendor demonstration area, including the complete line of products from Armor Holdings. As time drew near to begin the week-long training cycle, all the attendees gathered for the Pledge of Allegiance and opening remarks from Hillsborough County Sheriff, David Gee. The first speaker of the day was Assistant Secretary of Defense, Thomas Hall (RADM USN, Retired) who addressed current trends in the War on Terror and opened the floor to questions from attendees actively serving the military reserves.

After a short break, members of the 6th Air Mobility Wing's Explosive Ordnance Disposal Squadron provided an in depth

clinic on current IED triggering and construction methods being utilized in military theaters of operation around the world. The morning session concluded with a brief by BATFE Explosives Enforcement Officer, Kevin Miner on storage and security updates.

The attendees proceeded to the Walter C. Heinrich Practical Training Center; the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office 280-acre training site, which afforded the handlers five on-site venues for hands/paws-on training and certification. The venues included: imprinting and certification with peroxide based explosives; large quantity vehicle searches; multi-room search structure complete with booby traps, to include stimulant-filled tennis balls; vehicle searches in a parking lot including large container vehicles and a mass transit bus, and, finally, a Boeing 727 complete with luggage.

As the mouths were still drooling from lunch, handlers enjoyed a workshop on peroxide based explosive compounds which was coordinated and presented by Tampa SABT, Steve Miller and Dr. Kirk Yeager, respectively. Attendees completed the first day of the workshop with their first round of practical training.

Tuesday through Thursday, attendees enjoyed the 70-75 degree weather and the various venues at the Heinrich Training Center. The attendees were split into five groups and trained in rounds while attached to a member of Hillsborough's Canine Section and NAPWDA Master Instructors. Midday, the chow hounds enjoyed lunch on site which was provided by the Sheriff's Crime Prevention Bureau. There was more BBQ and sides than the attendees could finish. Our sponsors and Crime Prevention "Chef Deputies" Paul Alessandri and Mike Hudson made sure of that.

Training and certification was interrupted briefly on Wednesday and Thursday by demolition demonstrations coordinated by the members of Hillsborough County's Bomb Disposal Team and Tampa FBI. Special thanks go out to the Tampa SABTs and the entire Hillsborough Team led by Corporal Darrel Kandil. In addition to putting suitcases and clothing on the moon during demo day, the Hillsborough team also coordinated the booby trap house and handled the training aids for the week.

Thursday night at the Training Center, Hillsborough Canine Corporal and NAPWDA Master Instructor Matt Hall, provided the attendees with a sunset pig roast. The pig roast was accompanied by the sweet sound of rifle fire provided by the highly trained snipers of the Tampa Bay area who conducting night qualification. The ambiance and pig roast did not slow the handlers down. Friday, all attendees were summoned to appear at the home of the Buccaneers, Raymond James Stadium, where they wrapped up the workshop with a large venue search and graduation ceremony.

Two hundred and ninety four feet on the ground, with attendees and support, led to the outstanding success of this workshop. It offered opportunities for techs and handlers to exchange techniques and ideas. Enjoy your winter and Stay Safe. 🍷