



OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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California Law Enforcement Officers Depart for Anti-Terrorism Training in Israel

Sacramento – Eight law enforcement officers from six California jurisdictions leave for Israel tomorrow to participate in a groundbreaking anti-terrorism training pilot program. The officers are canine handlers who will attend a two month training course designed to integrate the use of unique explosive detection dog training techniques into anti-terrorism efforts. California is the first, and currently only, state engaged in this program.

The handlers are being trained through “Pups for Peace” (<http://www.pupsforpeace.org/index.php>), a non-profit organization that has pioneered a training program specifically to counter the types of suicide and improvised explosive device (IED) terrorist attacks going on elsewhere in the world. The \$411,000 cost of the program is being paid for with the State’s share of federal homeland security grants.

“Pups for Peace provides unique training opportunities to California law enforcement that focuses on the very kinds of threats we are seeing around the world,” said Matthew Bettenhausen, Director of the California Office of Homeland Security. “Through the Pups for Peace program, we are trying to anticipate and counter the next generation of terrorist attacks before they occur.”

Two handlers each from the Sacramento Sheriff’s Office and the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department will join one handler from the San Francisco Police Department and Alameda, Santa Clara and San Mateo Sheriffs’ Offices. They will spend the next 60 days in Israel being trained by a number of anti-terrorism, canine and explosives experts on various aspects of terrorism awareness and the use of explosive detection dogs in preventing and deterring terrorist acts. Israel’s history of suicide and IED attacks gives the participants the opportunity to train at actual terrorist sites and with explosive materials not available in the United States but could potentially be used in the U.S. in the future.

“Pups for Peace is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to reducing death and injury through the use of specially-trained explosive detection canines and handlers to stop terrorism

before it strikes,” said Annette Rubin with Pups for Peace. “This program was specifically developed to address the previously unseen terrorist tactic of using suicide attacks against civilian populations. We are proud of our partnership with OHS and look forward to addressing this continuing terror threat together.”

During the last week of training, executives from the participating law enforcement agencies and OHS will meet the handlers in Israel to observe training. After the completion of training, the handlers will fly back to the US, each with two canines trained in the program to be deployed in their respective communities.

“We are always in search of best practices for homeland security and law enforcement issues,” said Bettenhausen. “This is an important opportunity to work with world-renowned experts on canine and anti-terrorism training.”

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