

T H A I L A N D R E S C U E D O G
A S S O C I A T I O N

K-9 Search & Rescue Deployment



MUDSLIDE & FLASH FLOODS MISSION

11 - 15 SEPTEMBER 2011

Nam Pat District

Uttaradit Province

THAILAND

Mission

At the request of the Royal Thai Army Regional 3

Thailand Rescue Dog Association (Thai-RDA) responded to a call for K9 SAR assistance at the Mudslide affected area in Northern Thailand. Two SAR K-9 teams, Mr Suthikiet Sopanik with K-9 “Seua” (Dutch Shepherd) and Sue Redmond with K-9 “Savannah” (Golden Retriever) were available and ready to deploy immediately by road from Bangkok on Sunday 11th September. Three support personnel also joined the mission including Mr. Bernard Chu (Samsung, South Korea) and Mr Moon (Taiwan) who were, by fortunate chance, visiting Thai-RDA at the time. During 11-15 Sep 2011, Thai-RDA utilized its full capacity for K-9 SAR operations.

After traveling 16 hours through heavy rainstorms and consequential flooded roads, we arrived at base camp at midnight. Thai-RDA was accommodated at the Army Base Camp in Uttaradit Province, some 80 km's from the designated Search Area in Nam Pat District.

Search Day 1 - The team departed Base Camp by road early on Monday morning, arriving at Houy Dua Command Post (CP) by 08:00 for a pre-mission briefing. The flash flooding and mudslides had severely damaged or destroyed many homes and some 21 roads and nine bridges were also destroyed or damaged beyond use. Exact numbers of missing victims was not immediately known.

As other SAR Units had previously located victims some 30 km's from their village, Thai-RDA was initially assigned to check a specific spot, with the task being to search approximately 15 km's from the CP, on the main river where local villagers had identified some suspect scents emitting from the river banks. Working with a group of Thai Forestry personnel, the 2 dog teams were allocated a side of the river each to search for possible victims. The area was cleared and all personnel returned safely late afternoon to the Command Post for debriefing.



Search Day 2 – Thai RDA was formerly advised that two victims remained missing and thus were assigned to conduct a scan search along both sides of the river bank from Km 10 to Km 15 up-river. This area covered some very difficult terrain along a fast flowing river. Teams worked all day, methodically clearing the assigned area and ending up at the Search Area of Day 1.

The assigned areas were scanned and cleared, with no live victims or dead bodies being located.



Search Area



River Crossing



Rest Area

Mission Complete – Thai-RDA was later informed that other search units using a boat had conducted a water search, recovering the remaining 2 victims from a lake 15 Km's from our assigned search area. All personnel & K9's remained safe throughout and we regard the mission as successful. The heavy rainstorms continued to ravage the northern areas after our departure from the region. We understand that the floods will reach the central plain area of Thailand very soon.

From this incident we realize that climate change is affecting all walks of life. South East Asian countries have long been peaceful and relatively free of disasters, such that no one really knew about SAR Dog operations until Thai-RDA started 5 - 6 years ago. Now, Thailand and other Asian countries are looking forward and acknowledging that building K-9 SAR Units alongside other disaster management systems is an important and valid consideration in order to cope with the increasing disasters we will undoubtedly face.

Thailand Rescue Dog Association is Proud to Serve.