

9th IRO Mission Readiness Test in Berlin, Germany



The International Rescue Dog Organisation (IRO) organised with support of the German member organisation "1. RHS des Arbeiter Samariter Bunds" (ASB Berlin), the annual "Mission Readiness Test (MRT)" which was held this time in Berlin from 2nd until 6th November 2011.

Of the 35 lined up rescue dog teams from 9 countries, 20 teams were able to complete this test successfully. Also this year, at 7 searches within 36 hours - two of them at night - more than 70% of the hidden victims had to be found and so-called "minor subjects", such as first aid human and dog, INSARAG basic knowledge and a roping exercise, had to be passed.

For the first group of participants, the MRT started with the registration at the RDC ("Reception and Departure Centre") on 2nd of November. Following a veterinary check and after checking the operational equipment, the teams were transported across the city into the BoO ("Base of Operations"). Hardly arrived, the dogs were informed by the Senior Classifier, Mr. Chris Pritchard, on the challenges ahead and before the teams were allowed to go to sleep, they had to show their knowledge of the INSARAG Guidelines.

The next morning, the first three day searches began in a recycling center. The hiding places at this site, with its impressive pieces of concrete rubble and stone blocks, were not too demanding, but due to the nature and size of the site, the fitness and mobility of the rescue dog team was tested.

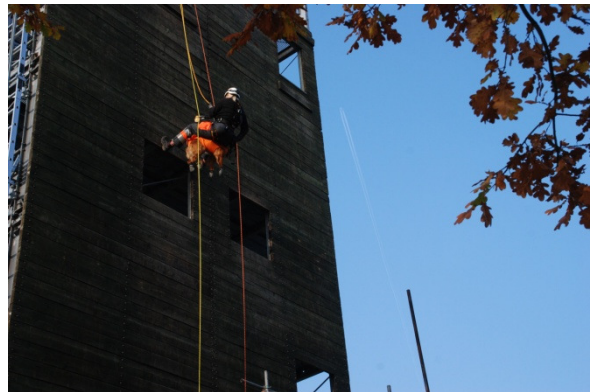
To get to the night search sites, the teams had to take up a 10 km long night march. Using GPS, compass and maps all teams found their way to the police training ground, where the searches were performed in an artificially constructed exercise village. At these work sites the handlers were not allowed to enter the buildings, so the dogs had to search independently for the hidden persons in the multi-story buildings. After the night searches, the rescue dog handlers had to do the scenario based first aid human test.



On the second and final day of the test, the last two searches were held at the training grounds of ASB Berlin. One work site area consisted of a pile of rubbles with a subterranean, branched tube system; the second site was a large area with high and low hiding places in containers, railcars, rubble piles and wooden pallets.

At this year's roping exercise, done from top of a training tower at the BoO, the participants showed no weaknesses and the subsequent short search was completed without any problems.

Secured by experts of the THW ("Technisches Hilfswerk"), the dog handlers had to do the abseiling independently with their tied on dogs from a height of approximately 15m.



The MRT ended for the respective group of dog handlers in the late afternoon on Friday the 4th November and Sunday the 6th November. After handing over the IRO MRT certificates to the successful dog handlers, the IRO board, the Senior Classifier and Mr. Detlef Kühn as the organizer, wished the participants a safe journey home. To those who had not passed the MRT this time, an expansion of training by the IRO was offered and it was promised to send a feedback on the negative results to the participants as soon as possible.

Report by the IRO Office from 22nd Nov. 2011