



El Dorado County Sheriff's Office



Press Release

Sergeant Chris Felton
530.213.3899

For Immediate Release

Sheriff D'Agostini Presents "The Operators"

Sheriff John D'Agostini would like to introduce the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office Crisis Response Unit (CRU). The CRU is made up of three specialized teams: The Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team, the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT), and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team.

SWAT:

The SWAT Team resolves difficult situations using strategies and tactics that emphasize control, containment and resolution with the goal of protecting life and property. The team members (often referred to as Operators) are committed to utilizing developed skills, tactics, capabilities, and specialized equipment to resolve situations typically outside the realm of the ordinary patrol response. Simply put, the Operators save lives and protect the community.

The Sheriff's Office SWAT Team was founded in 1979 and consists of one Lieutenant, one Sergeant, 12 Entry Team Members and two additional Placerville Police Dept. positions, along with four Sniper Team Members, and two Canines. These are all collateral assignments with the members having fulltime assignments in other areas. The Operators utilize several vehicles to transport the team, including a specialized SUV, an armored vehicle and a pickup truck for the Sniper Team. The Operators train 15 hours per month according the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards (POST) recommendations as set forth in Penal Code, section 13514.1. Operators must continue to pass rigorous firearms and physical fitness proficiency tests to remain on the team.



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To become a SWAT Operator, candidates usually express an interest and attend trainings prior to testing. After completing the application process, SWAT Team candidates participate in an all-day testing process, consisting of rigorous physical agility and strength tests, as well as problem solving exercises, marksmanship qualifications and an in-depth oral panel interview in front of the entire SWAT Team.

After being selected as a SWAT Operator, each team member must attend a specialized SWAT operator's course. This is a POST mandated 80-hour course consisting of terminology, tactics, mission planning, rappelling, legal updates and marksmanship. Operators also attend specialized trainings including breaching, less lethal and chemical munitions.





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This year, the SWAT Team acquire a new tool, the Ballistic Engineered Armored Response Counterattack Truck, also known as the "BEARCAT." This unique tactical vehicle was purchased without any cost to the community. The accumulation of asset seizure funds made this purchase possible.



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Fortunately for our community, the number of SWAT call-outs has significantly dropped over the past couple of years. The SWAT Team averages approximately ten call-outs per year. This includes barricaded and suicidal subjects, high-risk warrant service, and other high-risk situations. The El Dorado County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team has been asked to assist other Law Enforcement Agencies (known as mutual aid) with the resolution of their high risk situations, several times over the past years.

CNT:

The Crisis Negotiation Team is a specialized team that is comprised of skilled verbal communicators, who are used to de-escalate and affect the surrender of individuals threatening violence during critical situations. These situations include wanted criminals and individuals with suicidal tendencies that have barricaded themselves and refuse to surrender to authorities. The Team consists of one Lieutenant, two Sergeants, and nine negotiators, all collateral assignments. The selection process begins by the candidate providing a letter of interest and resume. Next, the candidate participates in an oral panel interview. Once selected for the Team, members attend a 40-hour basic negotiation course. Members often attend the advanced negotiation class as well. The Team trains at least every other month for six hours. The training includes scenario based situations and the utilization of their specialized equipment.



The Team uses high-tech tools such as specialized computer systems and communications systems, known as a "throw phone", and other covert specialized equipment. However, a successful mission all comes down to good old fashioned listening skills and the ability to communicate during a volatile and critical situation.



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CNT averages five to ten calls per year. Normally, the CNT will be deployed with SWAT. However, Team members frequently utilize their specialized abilities to diffuse situations during their patrol shift, and without having to deploy the entire team. Since most local law enforcement agencies have some form of CNT, mutual aid is not routinely requested. However, the teams attend the same schools; which enables them to work seamlessly together.



EOD:

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team was established in 1991 in response to an increase in incidents involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in our region. The EOD team handles all incidents involving explosives. This can best be described as "Hazard Mitigation." The Team is trained to disable improvised explosive devices as well as handle incendiary devices, weapons of mass destruction, and Haz-Mat situations. The Team has trained to be mission capable and to operate in all conditions from high angle to confined space.



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The EOD Team is comprised of one Lieutenant, one Sergeant, and three technicians, all collateral assignments. The selection process for the Team is rigorous. All candidates submit a resume, participate in an oral panel and complete a series of practical exercises. The oral panel questions are intended to reveal a person's problem solving ability, dedication, ability to learn and suitability to being on-call. The practical exercises are designed to determine the candidates ability to meet Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) height and weight requirements, ability to wear a level A hazmat suit and Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for an extended period of time and function normally, be able to negotiate terrain while wearing the bomb suit with the blast shield obscuring your vision, and solve a puzzle while wearing the suit.

Once selected for the Team, members attend the FBI school with assistance from the Department of Defense (DOD). This school is 240 hours of training in the basic skills needed to function as an EOD tech; demolition, render safe procedures, robot operations, disruption, electronics, x-ray, energetic tools, suicide bomber, large vehicle bombs, rigging, and many more. After which, techs received specialized and advanced training in explosive breaching, large vehicle bomb countermeasures, military ordinance, homemade explosives, and training specific to the "tools of the trade." The Team members train monthly according to FBI standards; which is 16 hours per month.

The centerpiece of the EOD Team is the Andros F6A robot. The robot has four cameras for navigation and observation. It has the capability to run up to 1000 feet either wirelessly or by fiber optic cable. The robot is able to function tools remotely as well as manipulate objects. There is a plethora of tools and accessories available for the robot platform. Our accessories include: a water based disrupter; a remote firing device; an accessory grip; a large needle to penetrate vehicles or walls; a hammer drill and a reciprocating saw. a PAN (Percussion Actuated Neutralizer) Disrupter, six bank piezo electric firing block, 1" accessory Grip Block (used with the "finger" or to deploy



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overpressure devices), mini Gander (giant needle to penetrate vehicles or walls), hammer drill and reciprocating saw. This robot also was purchased without cost to the community. Funds were obtained through federal grants



The EOD Team averages 12-15 calls a year. This year alone, the Team is at 21 call-outs. There is only one national school that all civilian bomb technicians must attend in order to be certified. This allows EOD units from all over the country to



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integrate and operate seamlessly. This was demonstrated on a national level in Boston, which had eight EOD teams working together. On a local level, the El Dorado County Sheriff's Office EOD Team trains twice a month with Sacramento PD, Sacramento SO, Yolo County, Placer SO, Roseville/Rocklin PD, CHP, FBI, BATF, Travis AF EOD, and Beale AF EOD. This close training enables all teams to respond to mutual aid calls throughout the entire area.

Significant Deployments:

2011:

The CRU responded to a residence in El Dorado Hills for a suicidal subject. After the subject refused to exit the residence (in which he was only a guest), CNT personnel successfully convinced him to exit the residence.

The SWAT Team responded to assist the Placerville Police Department during the Schnell School shooting incident. Operators apprehended the suspect at his residence without incident.

The CRU located and apprehended a suspect wanted for homicide out of Oregon. He was residing in Pollock Pines.

2012:

The Sheriff's Office Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team responded to one of the largest disposal operations in their history. The event spanned nine days, five separate responses, and involved five agencies from the federal, state, and local government. These agencies included Beale Air Force EOD, BATF EOD, El Dorado County Environmental Management, and the El Dorado County Office of Emergency Services. After Deputies responded to a deceased person and located military ordinance and a suspect pipe bomb, an underground bunker was located. Inside the bunker was a large amount of military ordinance, commercial explosives, suspected homemade explosives, and precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of homemade explosives, and a large amount of unlabeled chemicals. This was an



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excellent example of the importance of teamwork, patience, and of course steady hands.

2013:

The Crisis Response Unit (CRU) responded to barricaded subject that was wanted for a stabbing. The suspect was apprehended without incident.

The SWAT Team responded to South Lake Tahoe to locate a suicidal subject with military survival training. Unfortunately, he took his own life; but was found with a sniper rifle and handgun.

The CRU assisted EDSO Detectives with the apprehension of a suspect wanted for assault with a firearm. The suspect was a validated Sureno gang member with an extensive criminal history and numerous felony convictions.

The CRU assisted Napa PD with the apprehension of an attempted murder suspect that was living in El Dorado Hills.

The El Dorado EOD Team participated in a mutual aid operation in the town of Davis. After the UCD Police Department responded to what they initially believed was a clandestine methamphetamine lab; the investigation revealed a homemade explosive lab in a crowded apartment complex. The El Dorado EOD responded and assisted with the operation that spanned over 24 hours. Numerous dangerous explosive items and compounds were located and safely disposed of without incident

Other CRU Duties:

Upon deployment of the Crisis Response Unit, the teams take special care in developing safety plans of action in evacuating residents from volatile situations. These include door-to-door searches and reverse 911 calls to the affected community members. The team members also participate in community and educational events, such as Red Ribbon Week, the El Dorado County Fair, and the Citizen's Academy. Kids of all ages have the opportunity to wear the tactical gear and climb on the specialized vehicles and equipment.



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The team members also conduct training for Deputies including active shooter scenarios and other specialized tactical training. This allows our Deputies to be more proficient during many different situations.

All three teams within the Crisis Response Unit are prepared to assist with any mutual aid requests. The teams within the CRU routinely trains or attends schools with other teams; which affords a seamless cohesion of abilities and equipment. This includes locally, regionally, or nationally.

These specialized teams within the Crisis Response Unit are important components of the Sheriff's Office so that our residents and communities are safer. Sheriff D'Agostini appreciates the hard work and dedication of each team member. At the next community or educational event, Sheriff D'Agostini invites you to stop by and say, "Howdy" and to check out the equipment and vehicles.