

DDSP Fire Department Assists Neighboring Fire Department in Local Plane Crash

By Jessica Gonzalez, DDSP Public Safety

On Saturday, June 25, at 12:38 p.m., the Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, PA, (DDSP) Police Department received unconfirmed reports that an aircraft went down during take off from the Capital City Airport, located in New Cumberland, PA. The airport borders DDSP's property but the precise location of the crash was unknown at that time. DDSP Police and Fire Department are the closest response units to the airport and they are prepared with basic aircraft fighting capabilities for such emergencies.

A family of four from Tennessee had departed for Connecticut from the Capital City Airport in a single-engine Piper Cherokee. The plane went down in a trailer park on Lewisberry Road, located about 1,000 feet away from the runway. The explosion from the Piper's impact ignited two bordering mobile homes, leaving behind the plane's engine, a wing, and the tail.

Miraculously, no one on the ground was injured, but three of the passengers, the mother and her two daughters, were killed. The pilot, who was the husband and father, was critically injured and taken to Hershey Medical Center for treatment.

Because of their fast response time, the DDSP Police Department was able to assist with traffic and crowd control, and within minutes the scene was under control. The DDSP Fire Department was the second engine to arrive at the scene. Because of its specialized fire apparatus, equipped with a bumper turret, it was able to have first contact with the fire.

Not every fire truck has the option of a discharging a firefighting agent while moving; however, DDSP's newly designed engine has that capability. This feature is

based on a standard structural pump that possesses aircraft firefighting capabilities. Its pumper also has two separate engines that enable the truck to drive and discharge water or foam at the same time, thus making it possible to have direct contact with the fire upon driving to the scene.



DDSP's Bumper Turret was used to extinguish the fire.

Utilizing the bumper turret allows firefighters to dispense a large amount of agent from a distance. The bumper from the DDSP turret can discharge up to 300 gallons per minute applying water or foam from up to 150 feet.

A regular handline provides the capabilities to discharge 125 gallons of water per minute from up to 75 feet away. The initial application of foam cools the fire, absorbs the heat, and creates a vapor barrier to the ignition source.

The DDSP Fire Department helped to extinguish the fire, salvage and overhaul the perimeter of the crash, not departing the scene until 6:17 p.m. Through the combined humanitarian efforts of all local emergency respondents, the fire was contained to the immediate area of impact.



The Bumper Turret shoots 330 gallons of water per minute up to 150 feet.



Scene of the crash 1000 feet from the runway located in the upper portion of photo. Nobody was home and the two adjacent trailers were unoccupied when the single-engine plane crashed.

Fire Personnel Return from Gulfport Area

By Gary Brouse, DDSP Fire Chief

On September 7th, Deputy Chief Henry Hoffman and I returned from Gulfport, Mississippi after spending more than a week in the hurricane ravaged area. In addition to being members of the Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna PA (DDSP) Fire and Emergency Services Department, we serve on the Pennsylvania Task Force (TF) 1 Team, one of 28 FEMA elite Urban Search and Rescue Teams spread throughout the country. These are the specialized teams that responded to the Oklahoma City bombings, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon attack.

The multi-disciplined Pennsylvania TF 1 Team is comprised of 80 specialists highly trained in removing victims entrapped in a confined area, typically a collapsed structure. The team consists of Rescue Specialists equipped to breach through concrete and cut through steel; trauma doctors and paramedics with specialized medical training associated with victims being trapped in rubble, specifically trained in crush syndrome. The team also has structural engineers, hazardous materials and search specialists equipped with nationally certified canines

and highly sophisticated cameras and listening devices to search through voids.

I served as a Planning Team Manager responsible for the daily development of the Tactical Action Plans; identifying operational objectives, assigning the resources and coordinating with logistics and medical experts to develop communications plans, transportation plans, and medical plans. Deputy Chief Hoffman served as a Hazardous Materials Specialist. Deploying as part of the initial recon team, it is the Hazardous Materials Specialists' job to identify any hazardous materials in the area of operation and to take action to mitigate. We found numerous propane cylinders and natural gas meters leaking. In addition, they are the on scene specialists in assisting the safety officers in identifying



Piles of debris from the storm mark the Gulfport Area.

immediately assigned to do a primary search of Long Beach, a community just west of Gulfport that had been pretty well annihilated by the storm. Ohio TF 1, which had also been predeployed ahead of the storm, had been on the ground a few hours a head of us and had found numerous survivors in the community just west of Long Beach. They were working East, while we were to cover the six-mile area in between.

Throughout the next week our area of operations included communities known as Diamondhead, Lakeshore/Claremont, Waveland, and some of Gulfport. We worked alongside many other FEMA teams assigned to the Gulfport area including Indiana TF 1, Ohio TF 1, Virginia TF 1 & 2, Maryland TF 1, New York TF 1, Florida TF 2, Utah TF 1, California TF 1, 4 and 7. We worked 20-hour days, sleeping in tents where the daytime temperature inside averaged 105 degrees. For the first couple of days we relied on MRE's – Meals Ready to Eat. Our first opportunity came for a shower on Friday, which was fed from a garden hose. While the water was a little on the cool side, it was refreshing to say the least.

We interfaced with many displaced people, providing them aid and assistance, including finding two survivors on Friday. The one, who had been living on his boat, ran aground, lying in the trees inland. The other survivor had happened upon the gentleman with the boat and they teamed up, eating peppers to survive. "Upon arrival in Long Beach we hit the ground running. The first rescue squads were searching within an hour or so. Every building was removed from the foundation from the coast to about six blocks in from the coast. Most had

been reduced to piles of 2 x 4 lumber and building materials," said Deputy Chief Hoffman. It was as if we were entering a war zone. A retched stench of natural gas combined with the odor of decomposition permeated the air. Columns of smoke were seen on the horizons of different areas that had caught fire. Temperatures were in the 90's with high humidity and little or no wind. People were trying to capture water in milk jugs from puddles and ditches alongside the road. These are images that I will never forget. But the strongest impression was the indomitable will of the people. While we were getting spotty news of rescuers being shot at in New Orleans, these people would have given us their last sip of water.

"During the 20 hour bus ride I had plenty of time to think of what we would see. As we approached the coast we started to see trees damaged by the storm's wind. With this extent of damage away from the coast line, I wondered what it would be like on the coast," said Deputy Chief Hoffman. His only frame of reference was the two typhoons that hit the island of Okinawa during his duties as a US Marine in the 1980s. The damage in Mississippi was 10 times worse than what he saw on Okinawa. "We helped a lady remove her belongings from a car that was moved five miles from her home," Hoffman continued. "It was hard seeing people that had little to start with sifting through piles of debris. I hope the little things we did make a difference to some of these people." The community was very grateful for us being there. They are also very strong and determined people and there is no doubt in my mind that "the South will rise again."



DDSP Fire Chief Gary Brouse sits in the Control Center that served as both an office and sleeping area for the command staff of the PA Task Force 1 Team while on response in Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina.

proper protective equipment, and decontamination procedures for those teams working down range.

The Team left Harrisburg, PA with a 12 vehicle convoy of tractor trailers, buses and various support vehicles around 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday and arrived in Gulfport Mississippi at approximately 1:00 p.m. central time on Wednesday. The Gulfport area sat in the northeast quadrant of the storm where the most powerful devastation occurred, primarily due to tidal surge. In this case the tidal surge was close to 30 feet, leveling most everything in its path.

Upon interfacing with FEMA's Incident Support Team, which was prepositioned before Hurricane Katrina hit, we were



The scenes left behind from Hurricane Katrina.