



FEMORS NewsGram

Vol. 4, No. 1

Fall-Winter 2005



Because HOPE is NOT an Option!

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



**Katrina DMORT East
Assessment Strike Team**

Left to right - DMORT/FEMORS members: Mike Angotti, Larry Bedore, Russ Chisholm; DMORT members: Tami Schroeder, Rich Stallings, Danny Baldwin, and DMORT IV Commander Cotton Howell

Katrina, OJT Experience

Any question about whether FEMORS and DMORT can work together was put to final rest with the great teamwork demonstrated at the Mississippi and Louisiana responses of DMORT.

This edition of the NewsGram will be devoted to the response to Hurricane Katrina and the valuable roles played by many FEMORS members.

The lessons learned were invaluable and will only serve FEMORS better to improve your already well respected program.

We, obviously, will be presenting a good deal of material at this Spring's training programs directly related to lessons learned.

I will try to share with you the highlights of the Mississippi response but have only limited first hand knowledge of the Louisiana response.

Your FEMORS teammates made you all look good out there.

Larry

Before we begin with Katrina, an update on the status of funding.

FY 05-06 DOH/UF CONTRACT

Funding for FY 05-06 (\$240,000 for continuing operations for training and development) is still not released. CDC had demanded additional detail on expenditure categories from DOH which has been supplied. DOH is trying to get CDC to release the funds so hotel sites can be secured for training this spring. Like last year, the longer this delay, the more difficulty we encounter in securing meeting space at reasonable rates. The delay is also pushing back the dates for the deliverables listed in the contract. Some of those deliverable date changes (still subject to more adjustment if delays continue) are listed later but help with providing additional time for members to complete certain requirements.

A separate, but related, issue is the \$350,000 in ODP (Office of Domestic Preparedness) funding for equipping the portable morgue. DEM (Department of Emergency Management) actually issues that grant money to DOH which then enters a contract with FEMORS to provide a service. The DEM contract has been buried somewhere but efforts have been renewed to get it moving again. The biggest problem with this contract is that all orders for equipment have to be placed before the end of the State fiscal year which is June 30th. Again, the longer the delay, the smaller our window of opportunity to get the equipment purchased and marshaled on time.

So, what does all this mean to you as members of FEMORS?

As of Dec 20th, FEMORS has 315 active or provisional members (who will become active as soon as we deliver the required forms to DOH). But only 98 have completed the dual employment form and only 43 have completed I-700 as required.

Repeated from last NewsGram (with date revisions due to delays in receiving funding):

DELIVERABLE C: PERSONNEL FILES TO DOH

- A. By December 31, 2005 January 31, 2006, the provider will deliver to the Office of Emergency Operations a copy of the following FEMORS Team documentation: (1) completed State of Florida Dual Employment and Compensation Request and a completed State of Florida Employment Application for each Provisional and Active member of FEMORS and for new members as membership occurs; (2) an updated FEMORS Membership Roster; and, (3) an updated Compensation and Reimbursement Procedures and Pay Scale for FEMORS members. The provider will establish and maintain a personnel file for all Provisional and Active members of FEMORS to include as a minimum: (1) the original State of Florida Dual Employment and Compensation Request and the original State of Florida Employment Application; (2) a record of participation in FEMORS training; and, (3) a record of participation in FEMORS activations. The personnel file shall be maintained for all former members for a period of seven years post membership. This deliverable supports the Department of Health, Office of Public Health Preparedness Five-Year Strategic Plan Goal 5: Objective 5.6, Strategy 5.6A and 5.6C. (\$55,000)

Impact on Command Staff:

FEMORS must distribute and collect a Dual Employment form from each member in Provisional or Active Status. FEMORS will send to DOH by Dec Jan 31st

- For each member in Provisional or Active Status a copy of :
 - i. Dual Employment form and
 - ii. State of Florida Employment Application
- Plus updates to
 - i. Membership Roster, and
 - ii. Compensation and Reimbursement Procedures and Pay Scale (from FOG)

FEMORS maintains a personnel file for each member who has submitted the DOH application package and will continue to do so for 7 years past membership. This will include at least the:

- State Dual Employment form,
- State Application form, and
- Personnel Action Form (PAF) to document
 - i. Training, and
 - ii. Activations

Impact on Members:

VERY Important! Requires Action!

This helps Provisional members achieve Active Status.

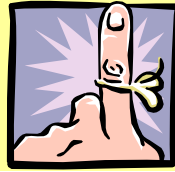
A New Dual Employment form must be completed and mailed to Kelly Lonesk by October 31st, January 15, 2006, by every member prior to activation. (The template and instructions for this form may be found at www.FEMORS.org at the member's log-in tab and has been added to the application package instructions in "Download Area for DoH OPS Application Package")

This is not limited to current State employees, it applies to EVERY member whether Provisional or Active.

Once a Provisional member's dual employment and application forms are submitted to DOH their status changes to Active. In the past, only deployed members had been moved to Active status.

DOH will maintain these forms at the ready to put into the payroll computer system for any member deployed to

speed up compensation following the activation.



**DELIVERABLE G:
NIMS IS-700 COURSE**

B. By May 30, 2006 the provider will deliver a list of FEMORS members who have satisfactorily completed the National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction, IS-700. This deliverable supports the Homeland Security Presidential Directive – 5 (HSPD-5). (\$2,000)

Impact on Command Staff:

FEMORS must distribute information for the on-line FEMA course IS-700 and collect verification of certification in order to provide DOH with the list of members who have satisfactorily completed the course.

The IS-700 course is the only one required to satisfy this deliverable.

However, eventually 4 ICS courses will be required for any member of a disaster response team under NIMS requirements. These are IS-100, IS-200, IS-700, and IS-800. Attendees at last June's Annual Training have already completed I-100. All 4 may be taken through FEMA's Independent Study Program, the NETC Virtual Campus.

- For on line training in IS-100 <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is100.asp>
- For on line training in IS-200 <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is200.asp>
- For on line training in IS-700 NIMS <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is700.asp>
- For on line training in IS-800 <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/is800.asp>

Members who have already completed one or more of these courses only need to send documentation of successful

completion (forwarded e-mail confirmation from FEMA or certificate copy mailed) to Kelly Lonesk for inclusion in the personnel file.

At some point in the future, DOH will direct FEMORS to activate only those members who have satisfied all 4 courses required for NIMS compliance.

Impact on Members:

VERY Important! Requires Action!

By January 31, 2006, each FEMORS member must:

- register for FEMA's Independent Study Program, NETC Virtual Campus at <http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/>
- visit the FEMA training web site for the IS-700 course <http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/IS/crslst.asp>
- successfully complete the IS-700 course and receive a confirmation e-mail from FEMA/EMI, or receive a certificate in the mail (usually several weeks later), and
- forward a copy of the successful completion e-mail (or printed certificate) received to Kelly Lonesk no later than **January 31, 2006.**

Note: Members who have already completed the IS-700 course, do not retake the course; just forward evidence of successful completion to Kelly Lonesk for your personnel file.

The NETC Virtual Campus has clear instructions to walk registrants through the process. There is even an option for college credit (for a fee).



Urgent Reminders

Deliverables require action on your part, NOW!



1. A New Dual Employment form must be completed and mailed to Kelly Lonesk no later than Jan 15, 2006

2. Forward a copy of the successful IS-700 on-line course completion received e-mail (or printed certificate) to Kelly Lonesk no later than January 31, 2006.

**WARNING,
WARNING:**

Failure to complete these two important items means your name MUST be removed from the list of Provisional or Active members capable of being deployed.

YOU CAN DO IT, YOU MAKE THIS TEAM WHAT IT IS!

KATRINA DMORT RESPONSES

Numerous FEMORS members responded to Katrina as DMORT members. At last count, from August through December, 27 FEMORS members were activated under their DMORT member status for 38 deployments lasting from a week up to months. Combined they put in 722 days of service or 8,664 labor hours. Several are scheduled to return for 2 week stints following Christmas and beyond. Those FEMORS members who responded are listed in the table on the next page.

The reports in this NewsGram cover primarily the actions at DMORT East with one notable exception that will be pointed out later. Any member who spent time at DMORT West is invited to contribute an article for the next NewsGram so we can share in that learning process also. (Commander Bedore and Deputy Commander Taylor will be returning to Baton Rouge after Christmas for 2 week deployments so more detail will be available in the next issue.)

STRIKE TEAM PRE DEPLOYMENT

Saturday evening, August 27th, DMORT IV notified its August Strike Team of 25 members to be on alert. There were 5 FEMORS members on the team:

- Ken Alexander
- Mike Angotti
- Larry Bedore
- Russ Chisholm
- Ken Cohn

Unfortunately, Ken Alexander ran into some red tape on proof of licensure issues and was not able to complete this part of the mission. (He later served admirably in Louisiana.)

Sunday, August 28th, the Strike team was mobilized to Anniston, Alabama to be ready for rapid entry into Mississippi following the storms passage.

FEMA also pre-deployed other DMORT teams for the Louisiana area as well as more assets than had ever been pre-deployed before for a US disaster.

KATRINA DMORT EAST - MS

DMORT East, covering the 6 counties impacted in Mississippi, was staffed by DMORT members from all 10 FEMA regions with DMORT Region IV in command. DMORT East established its first portable morgue site (DPMU) at the Biloxi-Gulfport International Airport which also housed the Air and Army National Guard Stations.



(To view a snapshot of daily life during that first month at Gulfport, visit http://www.dmort4.com/DMORT_East_month1.pdf.)

ASSESSMENT TEAM

Tuesday morning (1:30 am), August 30th, as Katrina was moving north inland, DMORT dispatched an assessment team of 6 to advance into the area to report back on conditions and resources needed.

The report to Dr. Crawford (p. 9) mentions the visit to the Mississippi Dept of Health before arriving at Gulfport. As an aside, while the team was in Jackson, Dr. Goldberger notified FEMORS Commander Bedore that FDOH was ready to offer the services of FEMORS to help out in MS and to activate a team. At that point two considerations were made: 1) another storm was brewing in the Caribbean and headed toward Florida, and 2) DMORT had numerous staff already prestaged for response and had not exhausted its resources to the point of needing any additional help. In a series of phone calls to the State EOC, the ESF-8 desk was convinced to keep FEMORS in reserve to serve Florida. DMORT was made aware that FEMORS folks were available should the need arise. (Continued p. 9)

FEMORS Members Responding to Katrina as DMORT Team Members

Counts	Last Name	First Name	State	From	To	Days	Assgn	Role
1	Alexander	Kenneth	LA	9/22/2005	11/23/2005	62	Morgue	Trailer Mgmt
2	Angotti	Michael	MS	8/28/2005	9/17/2005	20	Morgue	Various
			MS	10/21/2005	11/4/2005	14	Morgue	Cemetery Recovery
3	Bedore	Larry	MS	8/28/2005	9/25/2005	28	Command	Planning Chief
			MS	10/13/2005	11/11/2005	29	Command	Planning Chief
			LA	12/26/2005	01/06/2006	11	FAC	Investigator
4	Bell	William	LA	9/27/2005	10/8/2005	11	Dental	Ante and Post
5	Brewer	Pat	MS	9/11/2005	9/27/2005	16	Morgue	X-Ray/Ops Chief
			MS	10/10/2005	10/22/2005	12	FAC	Interview
6	Byrd	Jason	MS	9/21/2005	10/8/2005	17	Command	Planning/Ops Chief
7	Chisholm	Russell	MS	8/28/2005	9/4/2005	7	Morgue	Various
			MS	10/3/2005	10/18/2005	15	Morgue	Cemetery Recovery
8	Cohrn	Kenneth	MS	8/28/2005	9/11/2005	14	Dental	Post Team Leader
			LA	11/11/2005	11/22/2005	11	Dental	Ante and Post
9	Crowetz	Rob	MS	9/28/2005	10/12/2005	14	Morgue	Various
10	Dalton	Guy	LA	9/20/2005	10/15/2005	25	Morgue	Various
11	D'Andria	David	LA	11/2/2005	11/16/2005	14	Morgue	Various
12	Daugherty	Gary	MS	8/28/2005	11/11/2005	75	FAC	Commander
13	Dickinson	Gregory	LA	9/27/2005	10/11/2005	14	Dental	Ante and Post
14	Eddy	R. Michael	MS	9/12/2005	9/27/2005	15	Morgue	Various
15	Hauck	Timothy	LA	9/11/2005	9/26/2005	15	Morgue	Recovery
16	Havens	Nancy	MS	9/13/2005	9/27/2005	14	Dental	Ante and Post
17	Johnson	Luanne	MS	9/11/2005	9/27/2005	16	Command	Admin Chief
			MS	10/14/2005	10/28/2005	14	Command	Admin Asst
18	Kaiser	Laura	LA	9/19/2005	10/2/2005	13	Dental	Ante and Post
19	Klimetz	Gregory	MS	9/12/2005	9/25/2005	13	Morgue	Various
			LA	11/3/2005	11/22/2005	19	FAC	Records Mgmt
			LA	11/29/2005	1/5/2006	37	FAC	Records Mgmt
20	Lipton	Barry	MS	10/28/2005	11/8/2005	11	Dental	Ante and Post
21	Needell-Preslier	Barbara	LA	9/19/2005	10/2/2005	13	Dental	Ante and Post
22	Perry	Rick	LA	9/2/2005	9/21/2005	19	Morgue	Recovery
23	Sheehan	Robert	LA	9/16/2005	10/12/2005	26	Morgue	Cemetery Recovery
24	Silver	William	MS	9/24/2005	10/8/2005	14	Dental	Ante and Post
25	Taylor	Paul	MS	8/28/2005	9/18/2005	21	Command	Ops Chief
			LA	12/27/2005	1/6/2006	10	Morgue	Various
26	Westberry	Jan	MS	9/24/2005	10/9/2005	15	Dental	Team Leader
27	Woolridge	Edward	MS	9/11/2005	10/9/2005	28	Dental	Ante
			MS	10/24/2005	11/9/2005	16	Dental	Ante
			LA	11/10/2005	11/23/2005	13	Dental	Ante

GULFPORT ARRIVAL

The drive from Jackson to Gulfport was made difficult by debris impacting route US 49, the major north-south roadway, effectively making the 4 lane highway a one-way street in places.



MS Route US 49

Meetings with Coroner Hargrove and local EOC officials helped identify a potential morgue site at the airport but it took a few days to get clearance to bring the DPMU in and begin operations there on Sept 2nd.



Inspecting the first morgue site

One, broken, portable toilet was on site and placed upright for the ladies to use. Men were offered the meager wooded area close by.



Original Ladies Room



Russ Chisholm helping clean the first site.

REMAINS RECOVERY

Among the many early difficulties was the fact that retrieving human remains was complicated by destruction of roadway infrastructure and signage coupled with spotty cell phone communications. Urban Search and Rescue Teams, whose primary mission in the early days was to save lives, would encounter remains and report the location to the local EOC, often providing only a GPS reading. Even local citizens would report locations of victims, sometimes in person by driving to the Coroner's office.

Coroner Hargrove had assistance from other MS Coroners to aid in retrieval. DMORT personnel such as Mike Angotti and Russ Chisholm accompanied Coroner transport teams daily to bring remains to refrigerated trailers staged at various locations to hold victims until the DPMU could be established. Once established, all reefers were relocated to the DPMU.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE

With phone service almost non-existent, tents or other make-shift offices were set up in 3 cities to begin capturing the reports of missing victims. These multiple sites remained operational almost to the end when all FAC reporting was brought down to one location at the Coroner's office in Gulfport. All early work was done by hand on photocopied forms and only later entered into the computer system.

DPMU SET-UP/COMMUNICATIONS

The initial set up of the DPMU was complicated by the destruction of local infrastructure: no water, sewer, power, phone lines or communication.



Mike Angotti helping set up the DPMU



Larry Bedore at a make-shift office table



DPMU with air conditioning completed 9-4

A Federal MERS (Mobile Emergency Response System) satellite truck was also sent to the airport to established phone and internet communications. It also provided space for an early Command Post. This remained in place until early October when land based phone and internet connections could be established.



MERS Satellite Communications Truck

LIVING CONDITIONS (AUSTERE!)

Additional reefers had been brought to the site and equipped with shelves intended to double the capacity to hold human remains. Fortunately the damaged warehouse had operational loading bays for trailers so the reefers were used as sleeping units.



The "Condos" sleeping in a cool 70 degrees



Home Sweet Home!



Air conditioned tent dormitories arrived by the end of the first week

FEMA had also deployed a DMAT Strike Team of 6 to the DMORT operation and they were invaluable in helping cope with the heat affected workers.

The DMAT sleeping reefer was set aside to be the medical facility for IV rehydration, dispensing basic meds, stitching up cuts, and treating many ailments.



One trailer served as the medical clinic

DMATS helped monitor work time in Tyvek suits due to heat extremes (several needed treatment).



Staging of staff suiting up for work with DMAT monitoring

Hygiene was difficult in the early days so the team built a latrine and everyone used bottled water for washing up in high 90 degree weather.



Building "Katrina Latrina" until the port-o-lets arrived.



Arrival of port-o-lets was celebrated more than dignitary visits

Adapting to available resources became an art form.



Shaving with bottled water



DPMU Team "built" a shower out of one trailer



Cold showers were welcomed

NUTRITION-McDMORT

Food service evolved from water and MREs to group pooled purchases and donations of supplies.



Learning fine art of eating MRE's

Offers of food service by Salvation Army chuck wagons and others were politely declined so the local community could be served where the need was greater. Teams pitched in to make do with supplies donated and bought to bring some normalcy to nutrition.



Food service at McDMORT Café



Pat Brewer, and numerous others, took turns preparing hot meals



Some meals were embarrassingly good



Dr. Nancy Havens grabbing a bite



Greg Klimetz preparing dinner for the crew

CLEAN CLOTHING-LAUDROMORT

Laundry service teams formed to help all (with machines bought with team donations.)



"Who's next at the Laundromort?"



Even DMATs pitched in for laundry duty



Water tanker "buffalo" served DPMU, showers, and laundry

CHAPLAINCY

Caring for responders and treating the remains with dignity were constantly top priorities.



Sunday services



Deputy Commander Taylor escorting MS Bishop Packard blessing the workers



Bishop Packard blessing the victims

OPERATIONS/COMMAND

Coordination of work assignments required many support staff and use of ICS for span of control. New challenges often had to be resolved, even on an hourly basis. Adaptability and flexibility were critical assets.



Deputy Commander Paul Taylor (Ops Chief) in Command meetings with Coroner Hargrove (top left) and Command Staff



Team briefings kept responders informed

Suiting up in PPE was essential for all morgue work inside the DPMU with remains.



PPE Dressing Station



Typical station set-up (Pathology)



Hydration was a constant safety issue



Odontologists Ken Cohn cleaning up post mortem dental

Morgue processing was completed for all remains recovered prior to the approach of Hurricane Rita. However, a new mission of recovering remains disinterred from cemeteries due to flood waters began.



Disturbed cemetery remains

HURRICANE RITA COMPLICATION

Hurricane Rita forced the development of an Evacuation Demobilization Plan because the Katrina damaged warehouse was still vulnerable to wind damage.

Contingency plans were made to move the DPMU, personnel, and all storm victim remains to another location in northern Mississippi if Rita threatened the Gulfport-Biloxi area.



Dr. Jason Byrd arrived the day Hurricane Rita was approaching

Fortunately, Rita passed south and west of Gulfport so full demobilization did not become necessary but even tropical force winds threatened the safety of personnel and a DPMU housed in tents.



Orders to demobilize the DPMU and move staff to a safer location were issued (note wind on flag)



DPMU was knocked down and sleeping tents were dismantled with Rita approaching

IMPERIAL PALACE LODGING



Personnel lodging was transferred to the FEMA headquarters at the Imperial Palace in Biloxi and remained there to the end



Main entrance was unusable



Jason Byrd and R. Michael Eddy waiting to check into the Imperial Palace



Success at getting a room for R. Michael Eddy



Moving the team to find a meeting room



LuAnne Johnson helps Larry Bedore with meeting notes.



It takes a lot of people to run a morgue operation – it takes a team

On Sept 25th, FEMORS Commander Bedore returned to Gainesville while Dr. Byrd took over as Planning Chief during the DPMU transition from the airport site to a new and improved site and facility a few miles away.



DEPLOYMENT REPORT TO DR. JAMES CRAWFORD, CHAIR, DEPT. OF PATHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, SPONSOR OF FEMORS

The following is an excerpt from the report Commander Bedore issued on Sept 29th upon his first return from Mississippi.

Dr. Crawford:

In addition to my position as Commander for the State mass fatality team (FEMORS), since 1995, I have served as a member of DMORT (Disaster Mortuary Operations Response Team) a branch of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) which falls under FEMA and, ultimately, the Department of Homeland Security.

On Sunday, August 28th, I was deployed as part of the DMORT Region IV Strike Team of 25 to Anniston, Alabama as a prestaged team ready to respond for managing victims of the storm. As the storm made landfall we monitored the situation and the storm's path moving northward to our west.

At 1:30 am on Tuesday, Aug 30th, I was selected to lead an advance assessment team of 6 DMORTs into Mississippi under austere conditions for perhaps up to 5 days. We were provisioned with water, MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), and sleeping bags. Plans were to send us in by helicopter but winds remained too strong to do that safely. Instead, we convoyed with two other FEMA teams in SUVs first to Jackson, MS where we met with the heads of the Mississippi Department of Health (MDOH) about 11:30 am.

Reports MDOH was getting from the field were sketchy due to interrupted phone services. The names of the two advance MDOH

staff already enroute were provided as contacts for when we arrived in Gulfport. We learned that there were 82 independent Coroners in Mississippi and that the only coastal county with a functional Emergency Operations Center was in Harrison. The Coroner for Harrison County is Gary Hargrove. Contact with other Coroners in the area had not yet been established and the fear was that one of them had been a victim.

Harrison is the center of the three counties on the Gulf coast. From west to east they are Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson. Above these are three more counties Pearl River, Stone and George (west to east). All six took heavy damage with Hancock County as the epicenter of landfall. With the MDOH we discussed the possibility of establishing a single base of operations and assigning a single Coroner to serve as lead for the purposes of storm victim identification.

We reached Gulfport by late afternoon and arranged to meet with Coroner Gary Hargrove to explain what resources DMORT could provide if he needed them. He was enthusiastic to accept all the help he could muster. We discussed several issues including the possibility of having a single Coroner designated as the lead for Katrina victims. Through a series of contacts with the Harrison County EOC, MEMA (Mississippi Emergency Management Agency), and the Governor's office, Gary Hargrove was appointed as a "Regional Coroner" for all Katrina victims in the 6 county area.

To that point, all recovered human remains were being stored at a local funeral home near the Coroner's office which was fast exceeding capacity. One of that funeral home's staff, and a volunteer member of the Coroner's

office staff, had instituted a tracking system for remains being stored. Volunteer teams at the Coroner's office were making the actual remains transports based upon notices of locations provided by Search and Rescue Teams and other agents or citizens who reported locations of deceased victims.

Together we effected the ordering of a series of refrigerated trailers and worked to coordinate procedures for the reporting of sites for remains pick ups through the night. At a minimum, the GPS coordinates were to be reported in and all remains were to be covered and tagged with any available information.

The next morning, we focused on identifying a location for a temporary morgue with the help of the EOC and the Air National Guard based at the Biloxi-Gulfport International Airport. The equipment strewn warehouse offered had its sheet metal west wall blown away by Katrina but was essentially intact. It lacked power, phone systems, water, or sewer systems but was deemed to be structurally sound by a Gulfport engineer who visited the site with us. Since it was on airport property, there was adequate space to house multiple refrigerated trucks, generators, support equipment, and access was controlled because it was also a military base.

Once this site had been selected, word was passed back to Command and the rest of the strike team which had advanced to Hattiesburg earlier that morning. The full team, now numbering 40, arrived that afternoon to continue setting up operations. Chief among these was to create a Family Assistance Missing Persons Center so residents could report lost or missing family members. Since there was no phone service and most roads remained difficult to navigate, the operation was set up at the Coroner's office as many residents would find a way to travel to that

location. Provisions were also made to bring in the equipment for setting up a portable morgue at the airport.

From then on DMORT Region IV Commander Cotton Howell served as Incident Commander and asked me to fill the Planning Chief position under the Incident Management System (ICS). As Planning Chief my tasks included coordination of local contacts with military base commanders so that our Logistics Chief and Operations Chief could initiate their functions, projecting staffing needs for short and long term, and preparing daily Incident Action Plans (IAP) that document command structure, safety issues, and objectives for each operational period (typically from 0700 to 2100 each day).

Over the course of the first few weeks we adapted to the austere conditions by slowly gaining basic amenities such as sleeping space in unused refrigerated trailers, portable toilets and showers, and eventually air cooled tents for sleeping. Daily heat index factors were well into the 100 degree range. We had a medical unit detailed to us to aid those stricken with heat exhaustion even when we limited time in Tyvek suits to 15 minute intervals.

Just before Hurricane Rita came threateningly into the Gulf, we were tasked with a new mission to recover disinterred cemetery remains. The first cemetery yielded 200 caskets or loose human remains and, as of this time, another 8 cemeteries have been identified where similar work must be done.

The initial needs of the mission were accomplished as we processed all human remains recovered to that point and continued efforts at identifying the victims by dental, fingerprint and

comparison with information provided by families. More than half had been identified by the time the cemetery recovery mission was started.

Another UF member, and member of DMORT, Jason Byrd, PhD, was activated to serve as Planning Chief for a couple of weeks in my absence as I demobilized on September 25th.

Perhaps needless to say, there were countless other events that transpired over the course of these 4 weeks as DMORT struggled to overcome the challenges of the missions and the environment. The lessons learned and the field experience gained will prove to be invaluable assets for future development of the FEMORS program to aid Florida's entire emergency response system.

Respectfully,
Larry Bedore

CAMP MARSHAL

As Rita passed, local and federal officials sought a more appropriate site for morgue operations, less vulnerable to wind damage should other hurricanes approach. Camp Marshall, which served as a staging and lodging point for Federal Marshals and law enforcement agencies, was selected. The DPMU was moved to this closed- for-the season water park just north of I-10 on Oct 2nd.

The new site at the water park had more amenities available including water, office areas, and eventually, land based phone and internet lines.



DPMU tent being erected



Set up took a few days



Dental Section Leader, Dr. Jan Westberry organizing the new dental set-up



DPMU #2 set-up completed



Dr. Bill Silver's aerial view from a helicopter



Drs. Bill Silver (right), Jan Westberry (squeezed in center) and friends "consulting" after hours

DPMU East at Water Park Location



NOV 6 2005



Laundry facilities improved over the original Laundromort



One of the many dental team meetings



Larry Bedore preparing the daily IAP reports and Org Charts



Dr. Barry Lipton working post mortem Dental



Dr. Ed Woolridge helping Dr. Lisa Foley set up Ante Mortem Dental network



DMORT East - Subport, MS Tuesday, October 18, 2005, 07:00 hrs



DMORT East - Subport, MS Tuesday, October 18, 2005, 07:00 hrs

Typical daily duty assignment Org Charts



FAC member Bill Crawshaw collecting a DNA buccal swab from a family member on a field visit



Drs. Barry Lipton and George Loss study dental and medical records for potential matches



Coroner Gary Hargrove (right) and investigators from MBI (Mississippi Bureau of Investigation) pursuing leads.



Information Resources, VIP data teams



A foggy morning briefing



Strategy sessions in the Admin Office



Cemetery Recovery Team



The art of donning Tyvek in style



Commander Cotton Howell conducting the morning briefing on his last day at DMORT East before returning to North Carolina to continue Command from there



Commander Cotton Howell reassembled 4 of the original 6 Strike Team members before turning site command over to Region I Commander Mike O'Neil (below)




Supplies to re-casket cemetery remains



Coroner Gary Hargrove and DMORTs assist with re-entombment of re-casketed remains of a retired law enforcement officer who had no family



Dignified re-entombments to rebuilt mausoleums



Katrina

DMORT East

Day 74

Thursday, November 11, 2005

Victims Recovered	157
Identified	151
To Be Identified	6

DPMU knock-down and repacking was completed on December 15th

KATRINA DMORT WEST - LA

Likewise, **DMORT West**, covering the Louisiana response, was staffed by DMORT members from all 10 FEMA regions with DMORT Region VI in command. DMORT West is anticipated to continue operations in Louisiana for at least one more year.



DMORT WEST - DEMOB

DMORT East demobilized morgue operations on November 11th turning control of personal effects and remains over to Coroner Hargrove.

Additionally, a team of DMORT medical investigators and computer specialists stayed behind to train Coroner Hargrove's staff of 2 on use of VIP for identifying the last 6 victims.



First temporary morgue at St. Gabriel

The next NewsGram will attempt to provide an in-depth look at the work done there by the many FEMORS members who were deployed.

FAC DMORT WEST – LA

Special recognition is in order for the work of FEMORS' Logistics Chief Jonathan Scott who visited Gulfport Sept. 16th for one night then moved on to the FAC in Baton Rouge just to observe for a day at the Family Assistance Center.

Little did he know that his computer and management skills would be put to good use to help bring order to the many needs present at the FIND National Call Center. With bags packed for only an overnight stay, Jonathan spent many weeks there in a mostly volunteer role.

(Unfortunately, quick registration as a DMORT is not possible during a response with all the Federal rules and procedures involved. However, FEMA did provide for his lodging and meals while UF/FEMORS maintained his normal pay throughout.)

One week later, on Sept. 23rd, Jonathan e-mailed a report on activities there:

This is an update as to what I have been tasked to do.

1. Create scripts that would generate specific reports for the different agencies of the state of LA and the federal Government.
2. Update VIP from FM6 server to FM8 - This required a re-write of approx. 75 scripts and modifications of the layouts, tables and their relationships in order for a successful upgrade to occur. Install and setup FM8 Client on all systems used by staff.
3. Modify and merge an existing database created by the Odontologists to track and maintain information of missing persons records and to create a portal that would allow VIP to communicate with that portal.
4. Modify the VIP to collect information that was needed as a result of this type of incident. VIP was not designed for this type of event. Manifest of known victims were not available like one would have during a commercial airline accident.

5. Create a system and maintain that system of the collection of outside databases that contained missing persons reported and persons in shelters, (Red Cross, LA Hospital Ass., etc..) and cross reference those names (over 20,000 to date) across our database in an attempt to reduce persons reported missing but known to be alive.

6. Work closely with the State of LA's Office of Mental Health to produce analytical reports required by the LA Department of Health's Vital Statistics office. This required me to design and create an interface that would allow VIP data to be exportable into a SQL program called SAS.

7. Design and create a system on the Post Mortem Database to track bodies in the St. Gabriel's morgue and implement that solution. This is a project I am still working on. Currently they are using another database that is separate from VIP which should not be.

8. Resolve any issues that come up from the operation of the Local Area Network which includes a wireless system.

To date: Most of the tasks have been completed. It has been somewhat challenging for me, because I am the only one here that knows VIP and can create solutions and resolve issues. My hours are from 7 am to approx. 12 am. The reason why I have to work late is because the solutions I create during the day cannot be implemented until operations close which occurs at 11 pm.

I have been working very closely with all team members and volunteers and have had no issues with anyone here because of my affiliation with FEMORS. In fact many DMORT members did not know who we even were.

As you can see from the above tasks that I have been working on, you can understand why the delay in providing you with this update.

Hurricane Rita has forced all of those individuals who are not staying in the hotel to be sent home and to report back on Sunday at 7am. This order came from DMORT's Safety Officer.

We will be moving this entire operation into a 52,000 Sq. Ft. building by October 6th. This building according to FEMA and State personnel will house all social agencies and

local, state and federal government agencies in an attempt to create a "one stop shop" atmosphere for those displaced and in need of assistance from hurricane Katrina and now possibly Rita.

I will keep you up to date on new tasks that are assigned to me.

Jonathan

FAC OPERATIONS

Originally located at a hotel, the center was later moved to a much larger facility on a main roadway in Baton Rouge.



Jonathan worked closely with Don Bloom (author of VIP who helped FEMORS at the 2004 FAC training session) to make adjustments to VIP and lay out the processes necessary to manage the influx of missing person reports. He was responsible for supervising dozens of volunteers provided by a number of federal and state agencies.



Jonathan at the network nerve center putting out another fire



Incoming calls (far back of room) start an elaborate multi-step documentation process



Every person reported missing is first searched for by web access to see if they can be located or removed from the list as "found alive"



If a victim is not found alive, the caller is recontacted to arrange a live interview or start the interview process by phone



Personal interviews are conducted in privacy areas with chaplaincy support



Completed VIP interview packets are entered into the database at multiple stations



VIP database entries are "audited" or verified against the original for accuracy



Dental and medical record requests are made as follow-up to the VIP information



Medical investigators begin the process of searching the VIP database for clues matching morgue data to develop lists of potential identifications to present to the Coroner for certification and issuance of death certificates



Jonathan ties together data from morgue operations with VIP data and maintains live data on progress of identification process



Administrative support keeps up with the travel and lodging needs of arriving and departing personnel



Even during a break, that phone seems glued to Jonathan's ear.

The initial influx of phone calls reached tens of thousands that had to be screened. Daily statistical reports on the progress of Louisiana operations can be found at:

<http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/page.asp?ID=192&Detail=5248>

The practical experience Jonathan received in Baton Rouge will be put to great use as he continues to hone the FRED database system for Florida use with lessons learned.

FEMORS is justly proud of the way Jonathan stepped up to meet so many needs and demonstrated the can-do attitude and good will needed when everyone pulls together during a disaster.

Kudos for a job well done, Jonathan!



2006 AAFS FEMORS SESSION

At the 2006 American Academy of Forensic Sciences Meeting in Seattle, WA, on Thursday, February 16th at 3:00pm, Commander Bedore will present the FEMORS story to the General Section of the Academy as an example of a state system for managing mass fatalities.

2006 TRAINING SESSIONS

FEMORS will host three training sessions again this year for FAC, Annual (all members) and Odontology. These may be done back-to-back-to back to minimize members' time off from day jobs.

Target dates remain April or May but, unfortunately, due to delays in the start of funding, specific dates cannot yet be set with hotels. At the earliest possible time members will be advised of the dates to aid in scheduling.

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

Member feedback and suggestions are always welcome and can be delivered to FEMORS staff at the following numbers:

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Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, Happy Holidays, and all Other Forms of Best Wishes Possible for the Season and the New Year!

In the spirit of world-wide peace, FEMORS hopes that all its members enjoy a peaceful and quiet time with families, and in congregation with friends, who share so many of the belief systems that make this a free and proud nation in which to enjoy the pleasures of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

FEMORS is a sponsored activity of the University of Florida in collaboration with the Maples Center for Forensic Medicine.

FEMORS is supported by the Florida Department of Health with funding provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC Bioterrorism Grant Number U90/CCU417006)