

Testimony of

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before the

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

March 3, 2016

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the canine training programs at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Canine teams at TSA and CBP provide the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with reliable and mobile detection capabilities and a visible deterrent against criminal and terrorist threats.

TSA's Canine Training Center (CTC) and National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program (NEDCTP)

TSA procures, trains, and deploys both TSA-led and state and local law enforcement-led canine teams to secure our Nation's transportation systems through effective explosives detection, visible deterrence, and timely, mobile response to support rail stations, airports, passenger terminals, seaports, surface carriers, and other facilities.

TSA's National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program (NEDCTP) began as the Federal Aviation Administration's Explosives Detection Canine Program in 1972 and transferred to TSA in 2002. Congress has recognized the value of TSA's NEDCTP through its continued support and funding. TSA's NEDCTP is currently the largest explosives detection canine program in DHS, and the second largest in the federal government, with 997 funded National Explosives Detection Canine teams currently stationed at more than 100 of the Nation's airports, mass transit, and cargo environments. The success of TSA's NEDCTP is a prime example of federal, state, and local governmental entities working together with a common goal—to protect the transportation domain and the American people.

Given the security value of high quality explosive detection canines, particularly those best suited for passenger screening, TSA must ensure a reliable and adequate supply of canines. TSA procures canines primarily through an Interagency Service Support Agreement (ISSA) with the Department of Defense (DOD). Pursuant to the terms of the ISSA and as a result of our strong relationship with DOD's Military Working Dog Program, approximately 230 canines are supplied to TSA each year. TSA partners with DOD during the canine selection and evaluation process with both state-side vendors and overseas buying trips, ensuring TSA's needs are met.

In addition to procuring canines through DOD, TSA is exploring procurement of both trained and untrained canines from qualified private-sector businesses. TSA's goal is to procure an additional 20 trained Passenger Screening Canines and 20 untrained canines suitable for passenger screening environments in Fiscal Year 2016 through this new procurement initiative.

Once TSA procures a canine, the Agency pairs it with a federal, state, or local handler to be trained to operate in the aviation, multimodal, maritime, mass transit, or cargo environments.

The majority of canine teams working in the aviation environment are comprised of a canine and a state or local law enforcement officer. For these teams, TSA provides and trains the dog, trains the handler, provides training aids and explosive storage magazines, and conducts annual on-site canine team re-certifications. TSA partially reimburses each participating agency for operational costs associated with maintaining the teams, including veterinarians' fees, handlers' salaries, dog food, and equipment. In return, the law enforcement agencies agree to use the canines in their assigned transportation environment for at least 80 percent of the handler's duty time. State and local law enforcement participation in the program is voluntary, and these organizations play a critical role in TSA's mission to ensure the safe movement of commerce and people throughout the Nation's transportation security environment.

In addition to state and local law enforcement-led teams, TSA Inspectors lead 322 canine teams, including all Passenger Screening Canine (PSC) teams, which are specifically trained to detect explosives' odor on passengers in the checkpoint environment, in addition to their conventional explosives detection role.

TSA and state and local law enforcement handlers travel from across the country to TSA's Canine Training Center (CTC), located at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, to be paired with a canine and complete either a 10-week conventional Explosives Detection Canine (EDC) course or a 12-week PSC course. The canine teams learn explosives detection in an intense training environment, utilizing 13 indoor venues located on the CTC premises that mimic a variety of transportation sites such as a cargo facility, airport gate, passenger screening checkpoint, baggage claim area, aircraft interior, vehicle parking lot, light rail station, light rail

car, and air cargo facility, among others. Teams are trained to detect a variety of explosives based on intelligence data and emerging threats.

On March 4, 2016, as part of TSA Administrator Peter Neffenger's commitment to world-class training, TSA will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new 25,000 square-foot facility at the CTC with seven new classrooms, a 100-seat auditorium, and administrative space along with a parking lot and courtyard. The new facility is designed to support TSA's mission by providing, training, and certifying highly effective explosive detection canine teams and is the result of collaborative efforts among TSA, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Once a team graduates from the training program, they return to their duty station to acclimate and familiarize the canine to their assigned operational environment. Approximately 30 days after graduation, an Operational Transition Assessment (OTA) is conducted to ensure each team demonstrates operational proficiency in their environment. OTA assessments include four key elements: the canine's ability to recognize explosives' odors, the handler's ability to interpret the canine's change of behavior, the handler's ability to conduct logical and systematic searches, and the team's ability to locate the explosives' odor source. Upon successful completion of the OTA, NEDCTP canine teams are then evaluated on an annual basis under the most stringent of applicable certification standards.

TSA allocates canine teams to specific cities and airports utilizing risk-based criteria that take into account multiple factors, including threat score, number of people with secure access, and passenger throughput. PSC teams are critical to TSA's risk-based security efforts and are deployed to operate during peak travel times at 40 of the Nation's largest airports, where they

have the opportunity to screen tens of thousands of passengers every day. TSA is working to train and certify all of its 322 canine teams in both PSC and traditional explosive detection by the end of Fiscal Year 2017.

In addition to deployments at passenger screening checkpoints, TSA and law enforcement-led teams conduct a variety of search and high visibility activities that address potential threats in the transportation domain. For example, canine teams participate in Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) operations. VIPR teams can include a variety of federal, state, and local law enforcement and security assets as well as TSA personnel including Federal Air Marshals, Transportation Security Specialists-Explosives, Transportation Security Inspectors, and TSA-certified explosives detection canine teams.

The Government Accountability Office, DHS Inspector General, and other independent testers have proven canine teams to be one of the most effective means of detecting explosive substances. They are critical to TSA's focus on security effectiveness, and TSA continues to develop the NEDCTP to maximize the program's contributions to transportation security.

CBP's Canine Training Program

Canines have a critical role in CBP's mission of securing the border. At our Nation's air, land, and sea ports of entry (POE) and at preclearance locations abroad, CBP officers utilize specially trained canines for interdiction and in support of specialized programs aimed at combating terrorism, as well as countering narcotics, firearms, human, and undeclared currency smuggling. In between the POEs, the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) uses canines to detect undocumented aliens and illegal drugs at checkpoints and along our borders. The CBP Canine Training Program maintains the largest and most diverse law enforcement canine training

program in the country, primarily responsible for the training of 1,289 of the over 1,400 CBP canine teams currently deployed throughout the United States.¹

The primary mission of the CBP Canine Training Program is to develop, train and certify CBP officer/agent canine handler teams and instructors in the detection and apprehension of undocumented aliens, seizure of controlled substances and other contraband utilized to finance terrorist or criminal drug trafficking organizations. Under the direction of the Office of Training and Development (OTD), the CBP Canine Training Program offers formal training to various federal, state, and local agencies. Additionally, the CBP Canine Training Program supports canine training initiatives under the direction of the Office of International Affairs, in coordination with the Departments of Defense and State and USAID, in their support of providing foreign partners' capacity building and technical assistance, championing the development of global trade and travel standards, and promoting the United States Government's objectives in anti-terrorism, border security, customs, immigration, and facilitation of legitimate trade and travel. As a resource center, the CBP Canine Training Program provides guidance on canine training issues, legal requirements, and certification standards to CBP's operational components – the Office of Field Operations (OFO) and the USBP. While OTD develops and establishes the training requirements of CBP's canines, the utilization, maintenance, and deployment of canine teams is managed by the OFO and the USBP.

¹ Of the current 1,400 canines deployed today in CBP, the CBP Canine Training Program has trained 1,289. The remaining 111 are agriculture canines trained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Newnan, GA.

The CBP Canine Training Program oversees two training delivery sites in El Paso, Texas and Front Royal, Virginia. CBP's agriculture canine teams are trained at the USDA's National Detector Dog Training Center in Newnan, Georgia.

CBP Canine Training Program History

During the latter part of 1969, the former U.S. Customs Service carried out a study to determine the feasibility of using detection canines in the fight against drug smuggling. As a result, canine trainers from various branches of the U.S. military were recruited, and on April 1, 1970, the U.S. Customs narcotic detector dog training program was established in San Antonio, Texas. Initially, efforts were concentrated on training dogs to detect the odors of marijuana and hashish, but the ever increasing smuggling of narcotics made the detection of heroin and cocaine equally critical.

In July 1974, the U.S. Customs Service detector dog training operation was relocated from San Antonio to its current location 70 miles west of Washington, D.C., in the town of Front Royal, Virginia. In 1991, Congress approved additional funding for the facility in Front Royal, which enabled the construction of a new 100-run kennel, academic building, small arms firing range, and vehicle training areas. These new additions brought the detection training program facility up to date as it continued to produce canines trained in disciplines such as searching pedestrians and detecting the odors of narcotics, currency, firearms, and explosives.

In 1986, in response to an alarming increase in undocumented alien apprehensions and narcotics seizures, the USBP created a pilot training program which consisted of four canine teams trained to detect concealed humans, and the odors of heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana along our Nation's border. During the first five months of service, the four canine

teams accounted for numerous apprehensions of concealed people and over \$150,000,000 in seized narcotics. The operational impact of a trained detection canine team was clear. By the end of 1988, the USBP added 75 additional certified canine teams.

In order to establish consistency in training and certification standards, in 1993, the USBP established its own canine training facility in El Paso, Texas. The USBP National Canine Facility adopted ideologies and disciplines from European working dog standards and has received numerous accolades and recognition from local, state, federal, and various international law enforcement agencies.

In the aftermath of the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, as a component of the newly formed CBP, the USBP and OFO's canine training programs were consolidated under CBP's OTD and renamed Canine Center El Paso (CCEP) and Canine Center Front Royal (CCFR). On October 1, 2009, the CCEP and CCFR were merged to create the CBP Canine Training Program. An integrated core curriculum was adopted combining the best practices of the legacy OFO and USBP training programs. Training has been customized to ensure that the unique requirements of the OFO and USBP are met.

CBP took the best practices from the OFO and USBP canine training programs, and combined them into one standardized curriculum containing identical training philosophies and methodologies geared toward individual agency operational requirements. This compatibility strengthened CBP's ability to effectively deploy resources to meet operational requirements regardless of mission and/or operational component, in effect multiplying CBP's canine force through unification.

CBP Canine Training Disciplines

The CBP Canine Training Program possesses a unified training cadre consisting of OFO and USBP personnel who deliver training to integrated classes made up of CBP officers and USBP agents throughout CBP. This commonality brings with it the opportunity to seamlessly interchange staff to further integrate the CBP Canine Training Program. New canine teams continue to be trained in disciplines such as concealed human detection, pedestrian processing, detecting the odors of narcotics, currency and firearms, tracking and trailing, patrol, search and rescue, and human remains detection.

Concealed Human and Narcotic Detection:

The Concealed Human Narcotic Detection Handler course includes in-depth training and certification in all aspects of canine behavior, along with handling, training and employing a passive indication detection canine, as well as canine policy, case law and canine first-aid. Both the officer/agent and the canine are taught proper search sequences when searching private and commercial conveyances, freight, luggage, mail, open areas of land and structures. Concealed Human and Narcotic Detection Canines are taught to detect concealed humans and the odors of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, hashish, and ecstasy.

Search and Rescue:

The Search and Rescue Handler course includes in-depth training and certification in all aspects of canine behavior, along with handling, training and employing a dual-trained search and rescue trailing canine, as well as canine policy, case law and canine first-aid. In tandem the agent and canine are trained in obedience, tracking/trailing and large area search. The canine

teams receive training in rappelling for helicopter operations, backtracking, and deployments in various environments, including snowy conditions, deserts, forests, and mountains.

Tracking/Trailing:

The Tracking/Trailing Handler course provides added capability to teams previously trained in detection or patrol. This course includes in-depth training involving conditioning a canine to follow the route of a person or persons traversing various types of terrain.

Patrol:

The Patrol Canine Handler course includes in-depth training and certification in all aspects of canine behavior, along with handling, training and employing a patrol canine to search, detain and when necessary physically subdue violent, combative subjects. This course also includes training in canine policy, case law and canine first-aid.

Canine Currency/Firearms Detection:

The Currency/Firearms Detection Handler course includes in-depth training and certification in all aspects of canine behavior, along with handling, training and employing a passive indication detection canine, as well as canine policy, case law and canine first-aid. Both the officer and the canine are taught proper search sequences when searching pedestrians, private and commercial conveyances, freight, luggage, mail, open areas of land and structures.

Human Remains Detection/Cadaver:

In a regimen added to the Search and Rescue capability, canines are trained in the discipline of locating the odors of human decomposition. This ability enables the team to assist

in a myriad of situations ranging from locating the remains of persons who have expired in remote areas to assisting local law enforcement with suspicious death investigations and responding in recovery operations during natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

Canine Instructor:

The CBP Canine Training Program trains experienced agents and officers to function as canine instructors in each of the varied disciplines for their respective components. This consists of extensive academic and practical training on canine methodology and problem solving theory. The instructor develops the canines and handlers to function as a team from the initial point of training through to certification and graduation. Upon completion of training, instructors return to their respective stations or ports to provide maintenance training for existing certified teams, additionally providing insight and guidance to administrative staffs and serving as subject matter experts on the handling and deployment of canine teams.

CBP Agriculture Canines

In 2003, when the USDA transferred Plant Protection and Quarantine Officers to CBP, approximately 74 canine teams were included. Today, about 111 CBP agriculture canine teams provide screening at the border crossings, preclearance locations, air passenger terminals, cruise terminals, cargo warehouses, and mail facilities that process international passengers and commodities. All CBP agriculture specialist canine handlers and their canine partners complete the initial 10- to 13-week CBP Agriculture Specialist Canine Training at the USDA National Detector Dog Training Center (NDDTC). All the detector dogs at the NDDTC are adopted from rescue shelters in the United States or come to the program from private donations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the TSA and CBP's canine training programs provide highly trained canine teams focused on advancing DHS's mission to secure the homeland and protect Americans. Canine teams offer unique capabilities across various disciplines and can be deployed throughout diverse operating environments. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these important programs with you today.