

DMATTERS

Vol 3. No. 6. June 1994

Commander's Corner

Paul Rega

"To Serve, To Educate, To Research". These have been phrases we seem to be saying lately when we describe ourselves or when people ask us what we do. So it seems a good idea to share these thoughts with the TADMAT membership. **TO SERVE:** It's been a couple of years since we've been deployed to an actual disaster. Although this is where our interest lies, it is a very dependent activity; meaning it is dependent on the development of an actual disaster and dependent upon NDMS activating us. We need to keep ourselves in NDMS' faces constantly so that we're not an unknown entity. To further that goal, the TADMAT leadership has presented to NDMS innovative proposals such as a Center for Disaster Medicine based in Toledo and greater involvement in the Emergency Medicine residents, helped them out with their Computer Bulletin Board System, attended their meetings, kept them informed of all our activities, etc. In addition to that, we should be signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State of Ohio and the 180th National Guard in the near future. The state MOU is crucial because it should allow us to function in a state emergency with coverage and liability protection. Secondly, we're actively pursuing the development of a Board and incorporating ourselves as a "not-for-profit" agency in order to improve our strategic planning, develop important contacts, and secure funding. However, this is not enough. We need to increase our visibility even more and this is where the other two facets of our motto come into play. **TO EDUCATE:** At our last drill, close to 200 boy scouts received an education in emergency preparedness thanks to the efforts of Jackie Hogan, Kelly Burkholder-Allen, and their committees. Word of mouth from the scout leaders was very favorable. This is the first time we helped to train the general public in disaster management and it shouldn't be the last. Everybody in the community needs to learn something about disasters and safety and we should be spearheading the drive. This is not totally altruistic. It increases our visibility in the area, in the State of Ohio, and at NDMS Headquarters. It will help with funding from private sources and it will improve our chances to be selected for future deployments. But to accomplish that, we need the help not only of the TADMAT leadership, but of the general membership. **TO RESEARCH:** You will have read or heard by now that our patient satisfaction survey research was one of four studies accepted for presentation at a major disaster conference in New Mexico. Congratulations to us all! We're not stopping there. More research projects are coming down the road, some of them to include the University of Toledo's Dept. of Geography & Planning. One of them is currently underway. Why are we going in this direction? The answer is twofold. First of all, disaster research is very minimal, especially with regard to DMATs. Secondly, Any worthwhile research projects we can publish will again heighten our stature and increase our visibility to important people locally, statewide and nationally. The bottom line is we cannot stagnate in the debris of Hurricane Andrew. We cannot rest on past laurels, but must continue to strive to improve ourselves and our community. The TADMAT leadership has that goal ahead of it and needs the support and assistance of all

the members. As we proceed with this, it can only have a beneficial effect on our status as a Level-I DMAT and can reap rewards heretofore dreamt of.

Alberto strikes Florida Coast - First Tropical Storm of 1994:

Hurricane season officially began on June 1st. The National Hurricane Center (NHC) published a list of the names for all storms that form in the North Atlantic, Caribbean, or Gulf of Mexico. The NHC broadcast stated "on the average... there are 10 named tropical cyclones each year in the Atlantic basin with six reaching hurricane strength. The most active part of the season extends from mid August through mid October. On the average, one or two hurricanes strike the United States coastline in the course of the season". The following is the list of the names of tropical storms and hurricanes for the 1994 season: Alberto, Beryl, Chris, Debby, Ernesto, Florence, Gordon, Helen, Isaac, Joyce, Keith, Leslie, Michael, Nadine, Oscar, Patty, Rafael, Sandy, Tony, Valerie and William. The next tropical storm to develop will be called Beryl. Tropical Storm Alberto: Tropical Depression One formed near 22N 85W on 30 June. Initially moving west, the system turned northwest the next day as it reached tropical storm strength. Alberto turned north on 2 July as it reached a peak intensity of 50 kt. The storm maintained this intensity until it made landfall near Destin, Florida on 3 July. Reconnaissance aircraft measured a minimum pressure of 993 mb just prior to landfall. Alberto moved north-northeast into Alabama after landfall, and it weakened into a low pressure system late on 3 July. The residual low stalled over Georgia and Alabama and was traceable through July 7. Alberto affected western Cuba and parts of the southeastern United States. Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, reported sustained winds of 35kt with gusts to 57 kt at 1521 UTC 3 July. The minimum observed pressure was 999 mb at the same time. Unofficial reports from the Destin area indicate winds gusts up to 75 kt with a minimum pressure of 994 mb. The main problem with Alberto was heavy rainfall before and after the system was of tropical storm strength. Parts of western Cuba received up to 10 in (254 mm). Heavier rain was reported in Alabama and Georgia, with Americus, Georgia, reporting 21 in (533 mm). The resulting flooding has claimed 25 lives in Georgia and Alabama with 54,000 people forced to evacuate. Damage figures are incomplete as of this writing. There are no reports of damage or casualties from Cuba at this time.

Haiti Heats Up !

Last year, the TADMAT leadership was apprised of the possible mass migration of Haitians to US shores and the possibility that DMATs would be deployed to assist in the medical evaluation and treatment of these people. We were told that we were the only organized medical teams readily available to handle this potential disaster due to mass immigration. This information has been disseminated to the TADMAT leaders as well as to all the TADMAT members. If you've been following the news, the situation is indeed worsening there and more Haitians are being picked up at sea in one week than all of last year. On July 4th alone, 1000 persons were picked up. Current US policy states that these refugees will not be transported to the USA. There are plans that these refugees will be processed in the area of the Caribbean Islands. There are presently no plans to station DMATs off of the US mainland. Where this is heading we are not sure. NDMS is not

sure as of the July 7th conference call whether NDMS civilian DMATs would be utilized. The PHS DMAT is prepared to deploy. Contingency plans are being drawn up to involve DMAT use, but no definite plans have been identified. TADMAT leadership is beginning to gather intelligence and maintain a watch on current developments. TADMAT members are encouraged to watch the news for further escalation in refugee migration. If further developments occur, the TADMAT leadership will post a message on the TADMAT information hotline (419)381-5163.

Intercepted Letter:

TO: Churton Budd FROM: Bob Brownell Subject: Thank you I would like to express my sincere "THANK YOU" to you and the Toledo DMAT for your hospitality and willingness to share your information and knowledge. It is always great to meet those who have common interests of local, regional and national emergency medical preparedness. Let your team know that their pride, enthusiasm and skills really shows along with their hard work and continued training and will be a hard act to follow. I hope sometime in the future, we can organize a joint exercise between the Toledo and Ft. Wayne DMATs as I feel we can both continue to grow and learn by each others strengths. Thanks Again, Bob Brownell Ft. Wayne DMAT [Bob was a guest at the TADMAT Summer Field Exercises June 7th & 8th]