



Meet Brett. He serves on a remarkable squad of humans and other dogs, known as the K9 Emergency Response Teams, Inc. His sole purpose in life is to utilize his senses to track and locate people who have gone missing. On July 16, 2011 at Rib Mountain State Park, Wisconsin, Brett and his Team participated in a full scale, Mass Casualty Incident exercise, partnered with one of the Teams agencies; the Rib Mountain Fire Dept. The drill was a simulated thirty passenger jet airliner that crashed in a desolate part of Rib Mountain. There were deceased patients, living patients, and patients wandering throughout

the state park. Multiple fire, EMS, law enforcement and civil air patrol units took part in this exercise.

The morning was quite foggy due to severe weather that had just rolled through. It left us with temperatures in the mid 80's and humidity higher than 65%. The Search and Rescue team's main focus that day was to locate the missing victims, and any human remains near the scene. The main concerns for the Search and Rescue team members were the high temperatures and humidity. Secondary issues of concern were injuries sustained from a fall due to the varying terrain. Possibilities of either of these incidences affecting the personnel were fairly high, so the Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) was onsite, as well as the Minnesota Veterinary Reserve Corps (MVRC). The MVRC team comprised of two people; yours truly and a volunteer veterinarian out of Green Bay, WI, Dr. Daniel J. Gray. Our assistance turned out to be invaluable as one of the Search and Rescue dogs needed life saving stabilization on scene.

During the exercise Brett took a nasty tumble down the side of a cliff, onto a rock quarry bottom, roughly 110 feet below. In addition to the steep fall, this particular cliff was covered with jagged rocks they entire way down. When Dr. Gray and I finally arrived to the scene (which occurred about one mile from our station, up the mountain), we were presented with a dog in shock, having a temperature of 106.7 °F! Yikes! We raced and scavenged through our supplies for fluids, catheters, bandages, etc., stabilizing him the best we could with the very limited supplies we had. I went into emergency mode (maybe even blacked out for a moment), prayed real hard for him to live, and let my vet tech instincts kick in. Fortunately, they worked and Brett survived! Unfortunately, he suffered a bruised liver, a broken jaw, a broken rib and some traumatic dental and facial damage. He is recovering well now, and has recently been given the release to return to work part-time. Brett and his owner are anticipating full duty release by September 1st. The photos here show Brett and his owner, me and my fellow veterinary teammate, responding to Brett soon after he was recovered from his fall. Once stabilized, (whew!) we hurried him back down the mountain in the back of a Gator AVT. I had to restrain Brett with great effort the whole ride down as he wanted nothing more than to jump out and continue his work, locating and saving people. These animals are absolutely amazing, and LIVE to serve and help.

Because of his significant injuries, Brett has accumulated more than \$5,000 in veterinary bills. His owners, the human components of the K9 Emergency Response Team, are responsible for paying all expenses out of their own pockets. If you would like to help Brett, or make a contribution toward any future costs for these Search and Rescue dogs, a fund has been organized for them at:

Fox Communities Credit Union  
c/o KERT Veterinary Fund  
3401 E. Calumet St.  
Appleton, WI 54915  
920-882-7895

For more information on the Minnesota Veterinary Reserve Corp, visit:  
<http://www.bah.state.mn.us/bah/emergency-planning/mvrc.html>

This experience proved to be beyond rewarding. I would encourage any who have read this to reach out and get involved, whether it be volunteering for a local animal rescue, raising dollars for a good cause, or joining me and committing yourself to something like the Minnesota Veterinary Reserve Corp. Exercising your skill and education outside the office walls might surprise you.