



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Local Urban Search and Rescue Team Puts a Boat in at The Burgess Pool**

*Menlo Swim and Sport hosts training classes for the CA-TF3 Urban Search and Rescue Team, sponsored by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.*

**MENLO PARK, CA – October 1, 2006** – As the evening darkened on September 12, a group of about 30 adults gathered on the pool deck at the Burgess Pool. Donning reflective floatation vests, the group pulled to the water's edge something larger than the usual swim toy seen during play time at the pool—something considerably larger. In fact, the team was launching a 13-foot inflatable rescue boat. The Navy SEAL boat is commonly used in floods and light-seas rescues, designed to be light, fast and mobile, and capable of holding eight people or more.

Few know that Menlo Park has its own CA-TF3 team, one of twenty-eight task forces in the US and one of nine in California operated under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The California Task Force 3 Urban Search and Rescue Team is charged with quick response to any disaster in the US and around the world, supplying equipment and personnel to the location within hours of the request.

At the Burgess Park pools, the task force was holding one of its regular water safety awareness classes. The class provides an introduction to water rescue safety techniques for CA-TF3 members and extra training for Menlo Park Fire District firefighters. Water rescue is of nine specialized disciplines that the CA-TF3 can deploy to a disaster. Along with medical, technical teams and others, the boats and water safety-trained team members went to assist the Hurricane Katrina recovery. CA-TF3 expertise also includes canine and search specialists who made invaluable contribution at Ground Zero and in Oklahoma City.

Randy Shurson, former deputy chief for Menlo Park, heads up the CA-TF3 and has been involved with the CA-TF3 since its inception in 1991. "Rescuers need to practice falling out of boats. Our team encounters all kinds of obstacles and unexpected situations in the water, and if we can't drill how to react, then we're no help at all. When we get the call, we send rescuers, not victims." says Mr. Shurson.

As soon as the Burgess Park pool construction was complete, Mr. Shurson contacted Menlo Swim and Sport and was invited to use the facility at no charge. The CA-TF3 held four classes at Burgess over the summer along with classes at Rinconada. Mr. Shurson says, "I had 80,000 pounds of search and rescue equipment, but no pool to practice in. The central location of Burgess, the pool's 7' depth and deck space worked great. We can get a boat in, no problem".

Some of the exercises practiced in these classes take both strength and determination. Christina Crosby is a new recruit for the task force, a full time South San Francisco Fire Department management analyst who has recently joined the team. “The hardest part was pulling yourself into the boat, getting up over the slippery inflated sides with absolutely no assistance,” says Ms. Crosby. “To be deployable, and I need to be able to rescue someone twice my size and it’s not like rescue in a pool. We don’t really swim and can’t use traditional lifesaving techniques, because we’re required to keep our heads above water and wear PFDs.”

Along with boat drills, the team worked on strength, treading water, partner exercises, and tricks that keep rescuers safe. Menlo Swim and Sport is pleased to have the opportunity to provide a pool environment so that the CA-TF3 can practice without hazards. Menlo Swim applauds the mission of the CA-TF3 and looks forward to having the team back in the pool in May of 2007.

### **About Menlo Swim and Sport**

Menlo Swim and Sport is a community-based provider of year-round aquatics programs. Menlo Swim and Sport promotes healthy, balanced lifestyles through sports and outdoor family activity for the Menlo Park area, based at Burgess Park. For more information visit the website at [www.menloswim.com](http://www.menloswim.com) or call the pool at 650-328-7946.

###

#### Menlo Swim and Sport Contact:

Tim Sheeper, Director  
650-328-7946  
[tim@menloswim.com](mailto:tim@menloswim.com)  
[www.menloswim.com](http://www.menloswim.com)

#### CA-TF3 Contact:

Randy Shurson, Program Manager  
650-330-0150  
[rshurson@menlofire.org](mailto:rshurson@menlofire.org)  
<http://www.menlofire.org/catf3.html>

#### For Media Only:

Lorraine Sneed  
650-704-4491  
[lorraine@sneed.com](mailto:lorraine@sneed.com)