

# Rescue

Continued from Page 4

An hour-and-a-half after first arriving on the scene, the rescuers were in action, carefully picking through the debris in search of the plant worker.

Each team member is trained to perform a specific rescue operation. They then teach other team members and firefighters.

Formed in 1992 as part of a nationwide program initiated by Urban Search and Rescue, the Lincoln program is one of 25 in the nation.

USAR, a federal entity, works in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to ensure that local communities have access to equipment and workers trained to rescue victims from dangerous and difficult situations.

These specially-trained fire departments are then deployed where needed — sometimes to assist other rescue teams in various parts of the country

— by federal or state requests for help.

"This kind of training and equipment is well beyond the budgets for most communities," said Capt. Larry Nelson, technical-search team leader. "Lincoln is very fortunate to have a fire department with this kind of training for disaster rescue operations."

Training for team members focuses on difficult operations such as structural-collapse, high-angle, trench, and confined-space rescues.

In the past, all the firefighter had was a ladder to climb down with the victim slung over a shoulder, Nelson said. The victims were safe, with safety ropes and harnesses tied to them, but rescuers had nothing to stop them if they slipped, he added.

"The risk factor for rescue workers has decreased significantly since this training began," Nelson said.

Training for team members is ongoing and membership, currently between 100 and 150 members, is voluntary. Also, team members must pass a

physical before leaving on a mission — a stuffy nose being enough to disqualify someone from service for that day.

"We don't need to take problems with us," Nelson said. "We can't afford to take someone who may get even sicker once we get to the site." In addition to the physical and mental stresses of the job, family life can get difficult sometimes too, Nelson said.

"When it's your 9-year-old's birthday and you can't be there," he said, "it gets hard to explain that you have a job to do."

But for these rescue workers, what they do is more than a job, more than an attitude.

"For me, it means a willingness to serve and a willingness to sacrifice," Nelson said.

Fellow team member, Kevin McCoy, agreed.

"I like the ability to lend a hand," he said, "to go someplace and help."

McCoy did concede, however, that a certain element of risk also helps to make this career appealing.

"It's never boring," he said.

The job can be frustrating, however.

After hours of inching through small crawl spaces and sliding through water and sugar with video cameras and specially trained dogs, rescue workers began to realize that Juergens was probably not in an area that would have allowed him to survive the blast.

Nelson said although the team did not find the plant worker, they did narrow the location down to the base of Silo 7 — the only problem was that Silo 8 was leaning against the pile of debris, threatening to collapse in that direction.

"He was in a spot out of our reach," Nelson said.

After the team left, he said, local fire officials did clear away the rubble and found the body of Gene Juergens at the base of Silo 7.

"In this way," Nelson said, "our mission was a success. We located him and if he had still been alive, we would have secured the leaning silo and gotten him out."

# Colman

Continued from Page 5

"We've worked on establishing unity by coming together at the end of practice," Colman said. "The guys aren't just in it for themselves."

Colman also said the playoffs are a realistic goal for the Giants if the team continues to establish team unity.

The NFC East features great running backs such as Emmitt Smith, Ricky Watters, Terry Allen and Colman's teammate Rodney Hampton.

However, Colman said he is not getting ahead of himself.

"The coaches mainly want to see if you can go out and execute," Colman said. "Right now I'm just taking it one game at a time and concentrating on making plays."

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