

Hurricane Charley



CRASAR participated in Hurricane Charley. CRASAR predeployed Robin Murphy and Sam Stover on Friday 8/13/2004 at 1100 with Hillsborough County Fire Rescue in anticipation of a Tampa Bay landfall. When the hurricane hit Charlotte County instead, the state designated Florida Task Force 3 as the primary responder. FLTF3, with a light force of 42 people from HCRF, City of Tampa, St. Pete, Bradenton fire departments plus CRASAR and Bracken Engineering, moved into Punta Gordon in the midst of the devastation by midnight. CRASAR worked there from the wee hours of Saturday morning until Saturday 8PM. CRASAR put 4 shoe-box sized robots and 3 FLIRs, 1 medical triage sensor (prototype), and 1 night vision sensor (prototype) out in the field, with two UAVs capable of carrying video and FLIR and 3 other robots held in readiness at USF. CRASAR alumni and USAR robot manufacturer Mark Micire, who had been predeployed with Hillsborough, was assigned to CRASAR.

The primary technology used was the prototype night vision sensor from Ford Motor Company (in hand held mode). The robots, FLIR, medical sensors, and small helicopters (which came from grants from ONR, NSF, DARPA, CDMHA, and SAIC) were not used because the few large structures were not severely damaged, the evacuation had been successful so there were few unaccounted few people, and the imposition of a curfew prohibited further night operations. CRASAR demobilized late on Saturday evening since technical search, hazmat, or structural operations were not needed.

CRASAR assisted law enforcement authorities, helping to evaluate the field performance of the night vision sensor and and a new type of wireless network.