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President's Letter

Our Malinois excel in many things, one of which is scent work. Tracking includes different tests and trials and the practical application in search and rescue. Nose work and detection also rely on the ability of our dogs to use their scenting abilities and drive to get the job done. This edition of the newsletter was created to showcase the wide variety of scent-based competitions, tests, and real world applications. Thank you to the authors who were very willing to share their insights and give us all the opportunity to learn a little more about the world of scent work.

A belated congratulations to AWMA members and competitors Ivan Balabanov, Tim Karchnak, Steve Gregalunas, and Bridget Carlsen who traveled to Slovenia to compete in the 2016 FCI IPO Championship. Along with USCa representative Mario Gomes the team took 6th place out of over 30 teams. Tim and his dog Goose finished in 11th place in their first world championship – a huge accomplishment. A big thanks also goes to Markus and Maria Neutz; Markus was the team captain and by all accounts was a major supporter of our competitors.

We've had a busy few months! Since April, we have welcomed six new AWMA clubs; the Working Dog Club of Wichita, Sin City Working Dog Club, CB Working Dog Club of Canada, No Way Jose's Working Dog Club, KC Working Dog Club, and the Society for the Preservation of the Working Mechlesse Herder. ...cont.

Thank you to the members of these clubs for believing in the AWMA and helping us grow.

The 2016 AWMA National IPO Championship in Saco, Maine has come and gone. Good food, good company, great dog/handler teams. Thank you to everyone who made the event a success. Hard to believe that we are getting ready to start all over, with bids for the 2017 event coming in.

If you wish to be eligible to compete on the 2017 FMBB team, declarations are due on February 1. All the required information can be found on the AWMA website at the bottom of the “policies and procedures” page. If you don’t find what you need, reach out to one of us and we’ll get you the information.

I’d like to thank every member of the AWMA for your support – from world team competitors to first time handlers/competitors, you all are part of the organization. If you like what we do, let us know. If you see room for improvement, we want to hear that too. Help us help you make the AWMA the best it can be.

Anne Camper
AWMA President

The FCI Article Indication Trial (StPr) 1-3

If you have a dog that has been trained to air scent, or if you have an interest in article location and not necessarily tracking, you might consider training for the StPr. This evaluation is formalized in the 2012 FCI regulations and can be found on pages 122-125. As an overview, the test shows the ability of an off-lead dog to search an area that has an abundance of scent/tracks and indicate the presence of articles while the handler stays on the center line of the indication area. It is recommended that the indication area have cover that doesn’t allow for the dog to directly see the articles since it is a test of scenting ability. The articles can be composed of wood, leather, artificial leather or fabric/textiles and must not be visible. There is no aging; the search may start immediately after the articles are placed.

The test area is a rectangle with known borders since the dog must stay within the designated area (with leniency for being slightly outside the boundaries). There must also be a known center line for the handler to follow as they direct their dog across the search area. These are pointed out to the handler by the judge. The articles are placed on alternating sides of the center line while the dog and handler are out of sight. The dog is not required to find the articles in sequence. Article indication is done by the dog having the article close to the front paws. The dog may sit, stand, or down and the same indication style is not needed for every article. As with IPO tracking, the indications should be done convincingly, the dog should not touch the article, and no command may be given at the article.

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For all levels, the handler reports in with the dog on lead, then the dog is taken off lead for the work. The handler walks the center line and can visually and verbally signal the dog to find the articles on either side of the center line. When an article is indicated, the handler leaves the center line and proceeds to the side of the dog. The article is picked up by the handler and held up so the judge can see that it was found. The dog and handler then return to the center line and the command/cue to search is repeated until all articles are found or time has expired. There is no penalty for the dog searching the same area several times. When the search is done, the handler places the dog on lead, approaches the judge, shows the articles, and reports out.

As with IPO tracking, the difficulty of the test increases with each level. The dog must have a BH/VT and be at least 15 months old to participate. At the StPr 1 level, the search area is 20 x 30 m and there are two 10 x 3 x 1 cm articles provided by the handler that may be of the same material. Article placement is one to each side of the center line. Time to find both articles is a maximum of 10 minutes. For the StPr 2, there are four 10 x 3 x 1 cm articles of different materials provided by a stranger. These are placed two to a side on a 20 x 40 m search area. The time maximum is 12 minutes. At the StPr 3 level there are five smaller articles (5 x 3 x 1 cm) of different materials provided by a stranger and placed in no particular pattern on either side of the center line. The dog must find the articles within 15 minutes.

Evaluation is based on (1) obedience – the ability of the dog to follow the commands of the handler to search the area, (2) intensity – the drive the dog shows to search the area, (3) endurance – maintaining the search behavior throughout the test, (4) handler behavior – demonstrating the appropriate handling of the dog throughout the exercise (includes not leaving the center line except to pick up the articles), and (5) article indication – convincing indication by the dog.

It is reasonably easy to offer this test at your AWMA club trials. No tracking fields are needed. The only special requirement is an area in which to conduct the search. It is an ideal offering for club members who have SAR dogs, dogs that may be retired from IPO tracking, or those who are trained for nose work. The only caveat is that it may be problematic for a tracking dog trained to ground scent to now start air scenting. And although it can be done, proceed with caution if you plan to return to IPO style tracking after training for the StPr. ■

Belgian Malinois in the Urban Search & Rescue Environment

Written by: Mary Lyons-Lehman

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Mary Lyons-Lehman and I am a Malinois Addict. Oh, wait, wrong group.....

Seriously though, my husband, Dave, and I are owned by 4 Belgian Malinois. We have also fostered 3 Mal puppies for the Lackland AFB Department of Defense Puppy Program that is facilitated by Dr. Stewart Hilliard. In addition to our Mals we also have German Shepherds. I go back and forth as to what breed for which job. Disaster work? Always a Mal. Wilderness work? I could go either way and use both breeds.

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We became involved with SAR in the summer of 1994 while living in Prescott, Arizona. I was working at the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office when a body was discovered in a freezer in a stolen Ryder truck. You may have seen the story on Unsolved Mysteries or read the book (Cold Storage) where John Famolaro abducted Denise Huber after a night out with her friends in 1991. Cadaver dogs were brought in to search Famolaro's property to ensure there were no other bodies on the premises. That was the start of my past 22 years in K9 SAR.

Fast forward to May 2012. We were living in Texas and I was a K9 handler on Texas Task Force 1 (TXTF1), a FEMA Urban Search & Rescue team. I had retired my yellow lab, Casey, a year prior as she could not handle the heat and humidity that Texas dealt her during the summer months. I purchased, and tried out, 2 different labs that couldn't live up to the high standards that TXTF1 employs for their Canine Search Specialists. I asked two of our handlers/judges in Lone Star Mondioring Club to help me with selection of my prospective new partner. Don Lee and Ann Putegnat obliged and off we went to K10 Working Dogs in San Antonio, TX. Owner, Emily Van Eeden, at the time, brought some 4 and 5 month old pups out that she thought would work well for me.



Emily and Don set up a rigorous testing plan while Dave videoed all the pups and I observed. What an awesome day we had. I ruled out males pretty much right away since I really prefer females for my working dogs. The decision came down to two nice, small females. One of which after the last test, at 4.5 months, ran up to everyone in the room, jumped on them to play with her and the ball she was holding onto very tightly. All the drives I was looking for and social as well. It was a no brainer. Yes, it was a crap shoot as young as she was and that I couldn't screen her into the TXTF1

program until she was a year of age. But, I really felt she had what it took for the long haul and was willing to take the risk.

TXTF1 uses a screening process that helps to determine if the dog has what it takes to work in the disaster type of environment. The dogs must be no younger than 1 year of age at screening. We look for the obvious, i.e. hunt, play and prey drives. The dog must also have good natural nerve strength as part of the screening is done on a rubble pile. Sociability is also tested towards strangers and strange, neutral dogs. Handlers, who obtain a dog that they believe might make a good disaster dog, are able to work with that prospective dog to ensure they not only pass the screening but that they will continue to thrive in this type of working environment.

Jayden, as her named was changed from Devilla, has been nothing short of amazing in her journey to become an Urban Search & Rescue dog. We travelled to Miami, Florida in January of 2014 to take our FEMA Certification Evaluation, less than 1 year after she was screened into the TXTF1 program. The certification is good for 3 years from the date of the test. I was so proud of her during her test, even though I was a nervous Nellie, she did what she was supposed to do on the rubble and passed her test.

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From the time I brought Jayden home we worked on her training from day one. Her training included working on agility, slow and easy, not like the typical competition agility. She learned to climb ladders, walk a plank, crawl through tunnels, enter dark, confined spaces, navigate wobbly, unstable surfaces and much more. Whatever we can find to expose these dog to we do it. And they LOVE it. We try to challenge them on a daily basis, both physically and mentally.

In addition to agility, Jayden learned to follow hand/voice commands at a distance. She learned to go right, left, back and to stop/sit when told to. During this time she learned to trust that I was going to put her in the best possible position to get Live Human Scent should there be any. You see, what we do, mostly, is 'clear' areas and be able to tell our Search Team Managers that our dog(s) did not find any live human beings in the area they searched. That is a huge responsibility on the part of the dog and handler. There is no room for mediocre dogs when lives are at stake.

Obedience is also part of what is required for our dogs. An off lead heel with changes of direction is required when the dog has to perform its Fundamental Skills Assessment (FSA) before taking the Certification Evaluation. The FSA is comprised of 5 elements, those being: Obedience, Agility, Bark Barrel, Direction & Control & Rubble Search. The dog is required to pass this within 6 months prior to taking the CE for an initial CE as well as subsequent CE's for recertification.

The CE consists of 2 rubble piles approximately 8,000 – 15,000 square feet and at least 6 feet high. A total of 4-6 subjects will be placed between the two rubble piles, all of which are inaccessible to the dog/handler. One of the piles will allow the team full access to the entire rubble site. The other pile is limited access for the handler. Initially, the handler must send the dog from a designated starting spot, determined by the evaluators, and stay there until the dog indicates on a live subject. This indication must be at least 3 rapid fire barks before the handler is allowed onto the rubble. If the handler cannot immediately pinpoint where the dog is barking upon entry to the pile, they must return to the starting spot and begin again. Once the handler has had a successful first find, they must stay within a 5 foot circumference of the first subject located and direct their dog across the rubble to locate the next subject. Again the 'stay in place' sequence happens until the dog finds a potential third and/or fourth subject or until the handler feels that the dog has adequately covered the rubble and calls to end the test.

The testing team should find all of the subjects that were put in place, but can miss one and still pass. If a handler calls a false alert, the team fails. This can happen with subjects that are placed in a spot where there is much dispersed scent. It's up to the handler to make the determination if it's a different subject or one that was already found and marked.

My husband has recently obtained one of our Lackland foster pups that wasn't picked up by TSA. He plans on training her in SAR as well to replace his 11 year old Mal, Jetta. So, as you can see, we truly are hooked on Malinois. ■

AKC Tracking Program

Written by: Ann MacKay – Avonlea Malinois

The American Kennel Club (AKC) tracking program is designed to be accessible to all breeds of dogs, regardless of physical structure or breed tendencies. In fact, breeds that have earned the coveted “Champion Tracker” title (CT) range from “All American” to Wire Fox Terriers, and everything in between.

At the entry level, the first titles available to tracking dogs are the Tracking Dog (TD) and Tracking Dog Urban (TDU), which, while different, are roughly equivalent. To be eligible to enter these tests, a tracking dog must pass a certification test. The certification test is comparable to a TD test, and is judged by an AKC Tracking Judge. Once a dog has passed a certification test, they are eligible to enter an AKC licensed TD or TDU test.

A TD track is 440 to 500 yards in length, and can be from 30 minutes to two hours old. There is a start flag with a cloth article, and a second flag 30 yards away, indicating the direction. The track will have from three to five turns, at least two of which will be 90-degree turns. There are no changes in cover, save for walking or biking paths if they are part of the field. There are two articles in a TD test, the start article, and the final article, which is cloth or leather, and will be a glove or a wallet. No leading or guiding is permissible. The dog may be restarted one time, and only with the judge’s permission, if the dog has not passed the 2nd flag.

The TDU came about because clubs noted the loss of fields suitable for TD testing. The TDU test is comparable to the TD in length and age, but has some “urban” elements. It may be from 400 to 500 yards, and from 30 minutes to 2 hours old. The TDU test will have a minimum of two different surfaces, vegetated and non-vegetated. 10% to 30% of the track will be non-vegetated, such as pavement, sidewalks, parking lots, or low-use roads. There are three articles in a TDU test.

Once a dog has obtained either a TD or TDU title, they are eligible to enter the Tracking Dog Excellent (TDX) test and/or Variable Surface Test (VST).

The TDX test is 800 to 1000 yards in length, and is three to five hours old. There are five to seven turns, and at least three of these will be 90-degree turns. This track will have obstacles such as changes in terrain or cover, streams, fences, bridges or lightly traveled roads. There will also be a plotted cross-track which will be on two legs of the track. Neither obstacles nor cross-track will be found on the first leg of the track. There will be a start flag, but the direction of the track is not given to the handler. The judges tell the handler how to approach the start flag, but the direction can go anywhere in a 180-degree angle from the approach. The handler must wait for the dog to commit to a direction before the handler can leave the start flag. Once the dog has left the start flag, no restart is allowed. The TDX has four articles and they may be cloth or leather. While no force or guidance is permitted, the handler can physically assist the dog when obstacles or barriers are encountered, for example, over a fence.

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The VST track is from 600 to 800 yards in length, and from 3 to 5 hours old. It has at least three different kinds of surfaces, and includes both vegetation and two areas devoid of vegetation. The non-vegetated surfaces will be at least one-third but not more than two-thirds of the complete track. There are at least four and not more than eight turns. At least three of these turns will be 90-degree turns. There is at least one aptly named “moment of truth” turns on a non-vegetated surface. Tracks can be near buildings, fences, ramps, stairs and similar structures as one might encounter in an “urban” environment. There are four articles in a VST track: one each of leather, cloth, metal and plastic. The first article at the start flag will be leather or cloth. The start will be on a vegetated surface and, like the TDX track, can go any possible direction within 180-degrees from the approach to the start flag.



These are the four types of Tracking tests available within the AKC Tracking program. While the track requirements vary, the judging for them is quite similar. All tracks are judged as pass or fail, and there is no score awarded. This allows for many different working and handling styles. The dog must wear a non-restrictive harness while working and the tracking line must be attached to the top of it. Tracking lines can be from 20 to 40 feet in length, and cannot deliberately run underneath the dog. The handler must stay at least twenty feet behind the dog, except during the VST test, when they may follow at no less than ten feet. In the TDX test, when one might encounter dense vegetation (think brushy or woody areas), the handler can get closer. But they must drop back to 20 feet after leaving that area.

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Unlike obedience exercises, the handler can talk to the dog throughout the tracking test. While this is usually discouraged in training, it can be helpful in some situations. If you feel the need to give some encouragement during an AKC test, by all means, do so! But continuous blabbing by the handler can be distracting to the dog, or the dog learns to tune it out altogether. Less is generally more in this department! That said, I have been known to encourage, praise, or help to re-focus during a test. There's no penalty for this! While guiding is not allowed, restraint to keep a dog from moving too fast is allowed. But if the restraint appears to influence the dog's direction, you risk getting called (failed) for this.

Ideally, the tracking dog puts its head down, tracks at a steady pace, makes crisp turns and indicates articles clearly. However, there are variations on this performance that will still result in a passing score.

Dogs can cast or circle while tracking, and if it appears they are actively searching, will not be failed for this alone. It's not unusual for a dog to overshoot a turn, circle in an attempt to find the turn, and work it's way back to find the track. If the dog is continuously working, judges will allow handlers to work through this. Some dogs may "cut" a corner. This is ok, but can be unfortunate because an article might be missed. It's better to teach a dog to work more carefully through the corners. Dogs are not expected to work in a particular style during an AKC test, and judges see many different styles. Some dogs do indeed work with a "deep nose", and dogs that stay close to the footsteps are easy to read. However, some dogs may cast more, and some dogs may be more comfortable working somewhat off the track, especially when working a track that is more "fresh" than they are currently training. When tracking on hard surfaces, some dogs simply prefer working with their head farther off the ground, yet they are clearly working. Some handlers may prefer a slack line, while others prefer to "feel" their dog through the line. Either is acceptable, as long as the dog is continuously working.

The method used to teach article indications varies by handler and dog team. It is not necessary to tell the judge what the indication method is. It is necessary that the handler know how the dog will indicate the article. A missed article will result in a failure to pass.

While it is not really necessary to display the finding of articles during a track, we often do so. However, we must present all the articles to the judges at the completion of a track. Dogs can indicate anything they find on the track, and will not be penalized. For this reason, we encourage handlers to pick up all (safe) things indicated by the dog! While dogs should learn to ignore garbage found on a track, some have been known to scarf down discarded fast food meals, and continue successfully working.

There is no time limit for completing an AKC track. However, if a dog does not appear to be working, it will be failed by the judges. Fouling the track is not reason for failure, although for the sake of focus, it will be better to potty your dog before your track is scheduled to start.

In AKC Tracking, all tracks are "blind" to the handler. That is to say, a stranger lays the track for the team, and the handlers are not permitted to watch the tracks going in. Except for the rules for each level of test, the shape of the track is unknown to the handler. Acute turns are generally avoided while plotting tracks, however they have been found in advanced tests, when the terrain dictates.

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Based on a recent analysis of tracking tests, the approximate pass rates for AKC Tracking tests are as follows:

TD 53%

TDU 31%

TDX 20%

VST 11%

Dogs that have completed both the TDX and VST titles are awarded the title "Champion Tracker."

Try your hand at tracking! It can be a wonderfully addicting sport. ■

Ready – Set - Sniff

Written by: Dave Kroyer

If you are reading this article, more than likely you are already familiar with the capabilities of a canine's nose and how it pertains to scent work. Canines have long been used very effectively for the detection of a wide variety of things including but not limited to drugs, bombs, fugitives, cadaver, contraband, bed bugs and mold! The sport of Canine Nosework started officially in 2009 by the National Association of Canine Scent work. The sport of "Civilian Nosework" is virtually open to dogs breeds and their people! Since 2009 the nose work has taken off like wild fire and has been adopted nationally by UKC and internationally by Kennel clubs. The sport offers titles from entry level container searches, to Master Elite Titles! Nose work closely resembles the work of a narcotics detection dog, and actually the trials resemble a lot of the police K9 certifications.

The dogs are worked on leash and have to find a particular odor and alert or indicate in a 3 minute time frame at which the handler calls "alert". The dogs "indication or alert" must be passive (sit, stand, down, stare) and is not permitted to bother or go active on the finds. The odors that are used for the dog to detect are simple essential oils. The typical odors are as follows: 1. Anise 2. Birch 3. Clover 4. Myrrh 5. Vetiver (check the list of odors for what organization you wish to participate). The first title offered is "Pre odor test", or "odor recognition test". This is where your dog has to show proficiency detection each odor one at a time in a timed container search. The containers are typically 12 cardboard boxes set in a row, one of which contains the target odor. You have 3 minutes to call an alert on the correct box. If you call an alert on an incorrect box, it's a D.Q.

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After you have successfully completed a odor you can move up to level one which consists of the following elements. 1. Container search, 2. interior search(small area inside), 3. exterior search(small area outside), 4. vehicle search(3 vehicles in a row). Once again these are all timed at 3 minutes and place metals are given by best times! Once you have completed a level and all “elements” of a odor, you can advance to the next leveel! As levels in crease, so difficulty does also! As far as breeds that excel at the sport, well you guessed it! The same breeds that excel are the same breeds used in the military and law enforcement. That means our beloved Belgian Malinois is a perfect candidate for the sport! But that being said, you do not need a highly toy driven dog to do this sport. Most dogs work perfect for food reward (which by the way you can reward your dogs in trials).

Nosework is a great sport to add to your activities to keep your Belgian Malinois actively using their nose and brain. It also really helps the handler to “read” his or her canine companions! For a complete list of rules and regulations, I suggest visiting the UKC or NACSW websites. For info on dvd’s on nose work training, visit www.davekroyer.com. Until then, happy training! ■

SAR Story

Written by: Terry Miller

As I run home from work and gather pack, water, radio gear, and food for Jak, and me he knows. Search! He bolts out the door and loads into the car with all my gear. When we arrive Jak settles in to wait as teams are debriefed, support assigned, tasks assigned. While waiting I help ground teams by walking the bridge, steering ground searchers down paths that are easier to see from above.

Finally it is our turn! I get to the car and Jak perks up from his doze. I pack my gear then dress Jak for work. He is anxious to go and jumps into his harness and vest and prances away from car.

This is his first real search and I do not know how he will perform. He has trained for this but the start location is in a parking lot, which is now full of vendors and public shoppers, kids and dogs in tow. Scent location is not certain, it is past 24 hours old and it is dispersing as the day is warming. I have good advice, assuring me it is ok if he finds nothing and can not start. This is a hard one, just praise him for trying. I gear up and prepare my support people.

I present a scent article, clothes collected from the home of the lost person. Jak waves his nose over it, spins around, and takes off along the edge of the parking area, touching rocks along the edge as we go. I turn around and support is taking off after me to catch up. Jak takes a hard left through the vendors toward the highway, trusting support to take care of the people around us. We pass a female vendor and Jak's head snaps around and he is wagging his tail and all squiggly approaching the lady as if he has found his subject like he does in training. But as his nose touches her arm, he turns off and goes back to trail leaving behind a startled vendor who had not seen him approach. Jak works up and down the highway then makes a decision and bolts across the highway to a trail going up to the shelters. Love my support; they have taken positions in the road and pause traffic to keep us safe. We follow trail to a shelter and along a fence line. We do not find the subject, but I am happy that Jak worked hard ignoring all the distractions and all the people. He absolutely loves this work and receives all the praise and attention he is looking for from search crews.

Jak is my third Malinois, and my first in wilderness search and rescue (SAR), something I have always wanted to do, and finally have the right dog for the work. First, he loves scent work. From a baby in my litter, to IPO tracking, then trailing, he is eager and loves to use his nose. Second, he is very social and really likes finding hidden people and the joy of the find. As a Malinois he is always eager to work, is strong and agile and very quick to learn. As most Malinois, he is quick to recognize patterns and I think this has helped his scent discrimination skills. One sniff and he picks that scent from all others, necessary to find or confirm lost subject traveled, and which usually has high contamination from friends, family, police, and other searchers. And in some cases, crowded with public.

But this is not how Jak started his life.

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Jak is from my second litter from my girl Moki of Loups du Soleil. Sire was Fusel, bred by du Ciel Rouge kennels. I conditioned the litter for scent work, mondio, and general distraction and obstacle work as I was hoping for another IPO/Mondioring dog from this litter. My bond with Jak was immediate and he showed all the qualities I was looking for. He was not sensitive environmentally but was still very curious. He was confident and loved everyone, wanting to be in the middle of everything.

He was getting a good foundation in IPO tracking, Mondio skills and just general socialization. At about a year and half old I saw trailing videos posted on facebook. Combining search with tracking looked fascinating and I tried it with Jak at an AMWPDA workshop here in New Mexico. We loved it and it turns out Jak loves finding people. It was during this time while I was considering joining SAR that our breeder came for a seminar and made the comment about Jak "You finally have a dog you can do anything with." So we made the change from sport to SAR. The foundation tracking, obedience, and socializing has served us well.



My background in sport training has been invaluable. I started in Schutzhund 20 years ago with DVG club Summit where Gary Patterson taught me to love tracking and to think about scent on the track. I moved to New Mexico over 10 years ago where I have been a member of Endeavor WDC as a DVG member and also as AWMA. With my last Malinois, we earned our IPO3 and the STp article search, then switched to Mondioring where we earned our Brevet then on to MR1 and MR2 titles.

My experiences in IPO tracking and scent theory has helped me in training for trailing. The skills I learned training for Mondioring have been especially helpful in training a dog to work independently but under control, under high distraction. Like Mondioring, training has to be generalized as in you do not know what you will be asked to do under what conditions.

Dogs are used for SAR primarily as air-scent and trailing. But under certain conditions cadaver and tracking dogs may be used. The primary differences are determined by the situation. Tracking dogs search close to subject footsteps and are usually used in situations where subject scent is recent (under 4 hours old).

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Trailing dogs use a combination of footstep and air scent to follow a trail, usually working on much older tracks where it has been determined that a person is missing and can not be found, almost always in a wilderness situation. The dog uses subject scent from article or footstep, and is used to find a place of departure and direction of travel. These dogs need good scent discrimination skills to find where subject has been in highly contaminated areas.

Most air-scent dogs are trained to find any living person in a given area. They most typically run a grid over an area to find people or eliminate an area from search. These dogs will often specialize in types of environment such as wilderness, water, snow, mud and urban disaster situations.



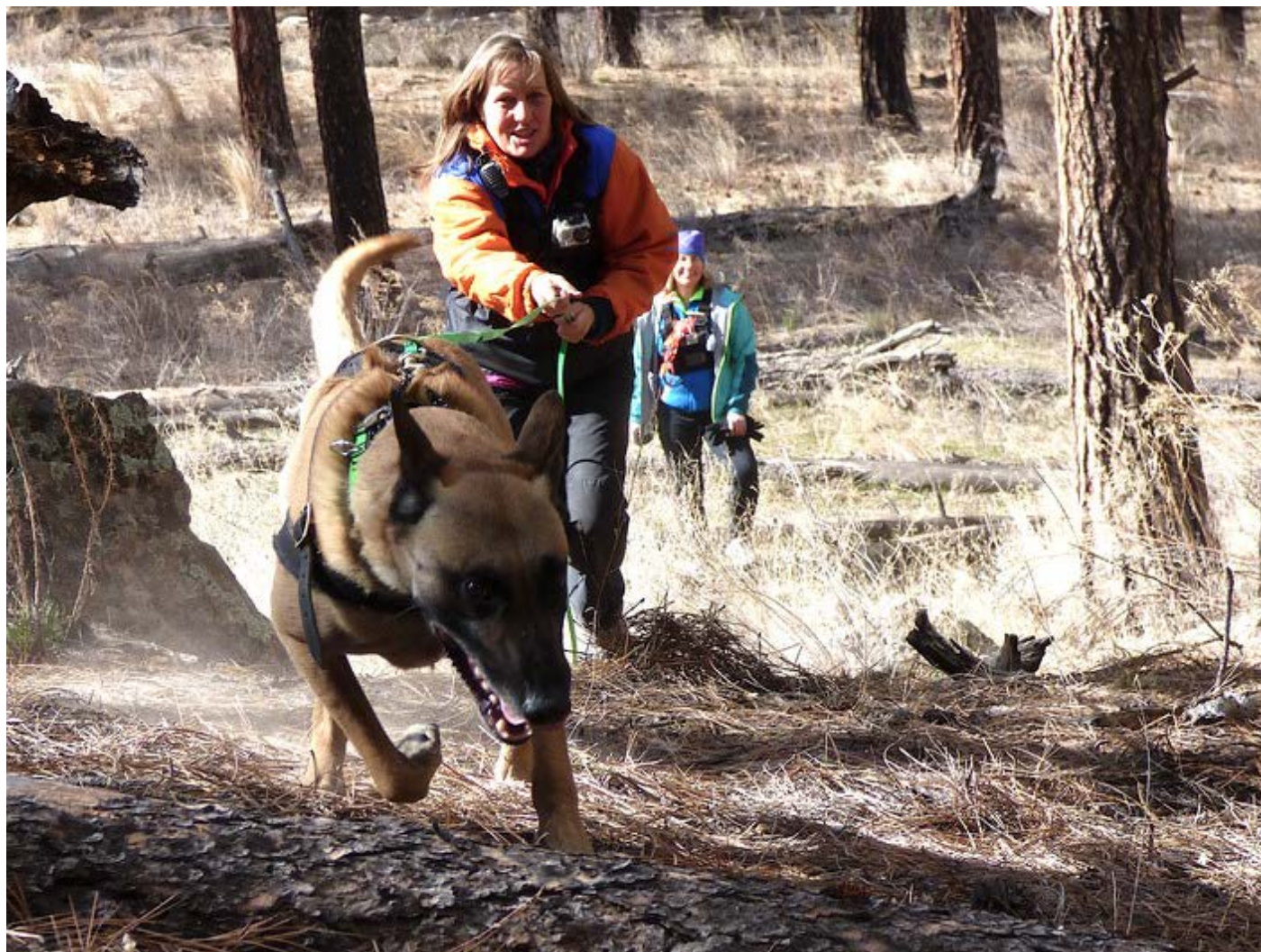
Trailing combines footstep tracking and air scent. The IPO or tracking dogs stay close to source and often track ground disturbance. The trailing dog will hunt for subject scent wherever it can be found, in footsteps, caught in the vegetation, pooling in low spots. This is important because over time the scent trail distributes and dissipates, the dog needs to find it wherever he can. The trailing dog needs to be in good condition and able to work for long periods of time. The Malinois is athletic and can move well in rough terrain, but may need to rest more often over the course of a long trail. The dog can not be sensitive to the environment because the trail needs to be followed wherever it may go. This may be through tunnels, along freeways and overpasses, bridges, trains, vehicles of all types. The team may need to be transported by ATV or helicopter. The SAR dog needs to work well through distractions, including other search people, horses, and dogs. Wildlife such as rabbits, deer, and even mountain goats and sheep are a challenge for Jak, but he is learning to ignore them. SAR dogs should be good around people, contact with other searchers and the lost is unavoidable. Most trailing dogs work using a 30 foot leash and this helps control and support the dog in his work and helps keep the dog within a leash length of source scent.

Because Malinois are so versatile, they can work in any of the search jobs. Where they will excel will depend more on their personality and temperament more than their breed.

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I know several mals in SAR, working various jobs including trailing, cadaver, and FEMA work. Elane Flower has three Malinois that have worked in SAR. LWee IPO3 MR2 worked in trailing and FEMA, XoeY has turned into a very nice HRD dog (see photo), and the youngest is training in SAR for air scent with discrimination. Each doing work their temperament is best suited for. Malinois are popular with law enforcement for trailing and tracking in the pursuit of criminals where apprehension may be needed. I recently attended a 5 day seminar in Colorado for man trailing, half the dogs were mals training trailing for apprehension, I had the only mal along with several hounds doing search without bite work. My friend and mentor Carl Alexander from Tennessee is a court expert in tracking and cadaver, he owns and trains mostly bloodhounds but does use Mal-Dutchie crosses for cadaver and HRD search. He loves Jak's enthusiasm and agility and would love to someday have a nice Mal for trailing in Police work.

Carl and his bloodhound Zuke have worked in both SAR and police work with hundreds of finds for both evidence and missing persons. I hope to build a partnership with my dog as fulfilling as he has had with his partner in search, Zuke.



...cont.

Every state handles this differently but in New Mexico all search and rescue incidents are coordinated by the New Mexico State Police Division under the Department of Public Safety. The New Mexico Search and Rescue Council is composed of teams and is a non-profit, all volunteer organization. Handlers and their dogs train mostly in their spare time after work just like the sport dogs. But in addition to dog training, handlers must also be trained and tested before they can search.

Before you consider SAR work with your dog, contact a team in your area so you can visit and learn what it takes to participate. Expect to train your dog at least as often as you do for sport, then add time for your own training and hours supporting SAR efforts. Visit a few K9 teams if you can as teams differ in their personality, their goals, and level of support for you and your dog. Certify and support local SAR efforts so you can watch the teams work. And finally, have a few trainers evaluate you and your dog and discuss what would be a best fit. Malinois are versatile and can do well at this work. The type you choose will depend more on your dog's temperament and personality. Volunteering for search and rescue is very satisfying and a great way to serve your community. And if you do decide to join SAR, we welcome you and all the hard work you will put in - so the missing can be found.

All photos at <https://sundogs.smugmug.com/SearchandRescue/JAK-and-SAR/> ■

