

SAR Dog News

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Founding members: K-9 Stryker, K-9 Thor, K-9 Beau, Eileen M. Nobles, Susan Bulanda, K-9 Roo, Leslie Godchaux, Brian R. Hendrickson, Continental Kennel Club, Inc., K-9 River, K-9 Persha, Jan Thompson, K-9 Cali

TRAINING

Abbreviated information of upcoming schools and conferences will be listed in each newsletter. If you know of one and/or are sponsoring one, please let us know at newsletter@n-sda.org so it can be included.

NSDA provides this list for your convenience.

January 21-25, 2008; Trailing, Air Scent, Land and Water HRD Training Seminar in Forsyth, Ga. Hosted by Central Georgia K-9 Search and Rescue. For more information visit our website: <http://www.centralgeorgiak9sar.com> or deepark10@bellsouth.net

Feb 28-March 1st 2008; Airscent Seminar hosted by North Alabama Search Dog Assoc. For more information: check the website at <http://www.nasdak9.org/airscent08.htm> or email info@nasdak9.org

May 28-31, 2008; Handler Instruction and Training Seminar (HITS), Denver, CO. For more info, see www.PoliceK9Magazine.com

September 19-21, 2008; Dog Meet, presented by Intermountain Search Dogs, Spokane WA. Location: Camp Reed north of Spokane, Washington. For more information, contact Julie Wilson at DM2008@live.com



**“The Voice
of K-9
Search and
Rescue”**

Logo & Slogan Contest Winners

Congratulations to Shannon Blackwell author of the slogan and Tennille Paden, the designer of the logo. Each winner will receive one free year's membership in NSDA, an item with the logo and slogan on it and permanent recognition on the website.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the contests and those who took the time to vote. Active participation is what keeps our alliance healthy.

K-9 Photos Wanted

The Board is developing the NSDA web page, brochures and publicity photos. We would like to feature your canine partners in the process of performing their various disciplines. If you have a photo that depicts what working search and rescue canines are all about, please forward a photo in jpg format to snelling@olympen.com



Thank You

A thank you to Continental Kennel Club for their support in printing NSDA membership ID cards.



Testing the Tests

By Dee Wild,
President

The NSDA Executive Board believes that input from handlers is a major component in developing truly recognized and utilized national standards. Therefore, we are providing an opportunity to handlers to help us test our certifications as we go through the development process. We must state that K-9's and handlers that go through this process **will not and are not** receiving certification. You will simply be testing the test in order to help us determine its validity.

The Host team will be given very specific questions that they will be required to complete in order to provide the committee with viable information regarding setting up the tests, validity in different environments and terrains, and issues that are identified during the testing process. Host teams will have to agree to set up the test exactly as stated and not add or delete any phase. This is necessary in order to make sure we are comparing apples to apples between Hosting teams. Once the tests are completed, all forms will be returned to the committee to determine what changes need to occur in order to make it more valid, no matter where the test is given. There will be deadlines in doing the tests and getting the completed forms back to the committee.

In order to be considered, a team must have the ability and willingness to set up and control the test as required. Should we receive several requests from the same area, we will ask that only one team host the test and open it to others in the area that expressed interest in testing their canines. Priority will be given to teams that have members in NSDA.

If your team is interested in helping us in this process, you will need to contact the individual listed in each discipline announcement in our newsletter. Avalanche is the first test that is available for field testing (see below); other disciplines will be released over the next several weeks for field testing as they become ready. We strongly invite our members and handlers in other countries to participate in this process

The NSDA K-9 Avalanche Test is available for field testing to any Avalanche K-9 team or teams interested. With two people buried, the test is a variation of the basic site test with which most people are familiar. The addition of contamination one might expect to find on an avalanche disaster site, if you were deployed after the search had already begun, raises the bar of performance. It demands that the team testing be well equipped for reality, as contamination is usually found in the real world. Avalanche searches are a difficult assignment and the objective of the testing process is to encourage teams to train for the real world scenario. Once in place for certification, the NSDA testing process will require documentation of trainings, skills and abilities unique to the avalanche profile.

Contact Terry Crooks at tcrooks@frontiernet.net for more information.

JOIN NSDA

Join an organization whose aim is to provide programs designed and developed for the dog handler. Take part in the building of those programs and standards. Assist in the progression of SAR canine training and certification. Work with and learn from the best dog handlers in the country. See the Alliance's website at www.n-sda.org for further information and an application.

NSDA CONFERENCE



September 18 – 21
Columbus, Indiana

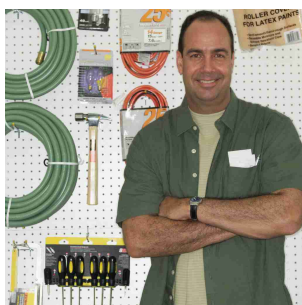
Plans for the NSDA conference at the Camp Atterbury military facility are progressing.

Included will be urban and wilderness searches for Area and HRD, disaster piles, building searches and trailing. This will be a hands on conference.

Camping by RV and tent will be available one mile from the base at \$15.00 per night with RV hookups and \$8.00 per night for unimproved tent sites. Hampton Inn, Days Inn and Red Roof Inn are all located close by and should accept canines.

Final arrangements are being made. Updates will be in the next newsletter on classes, instructors and costs.

Mark the date on your calendar and watch for surprises in classes offered.



Conference Vendors Wanted

As NSDA is bringing handlers together from wide-ranging locales, the Alliance would like

to provide them with vendors who have the latest products for canines and handlers.

If you have a favorite supplier that would like to attend and display their merchandise, contact snelling@olympen.com with the information.



K-9 SAR Around the World

K-9 S&R in Austria

By Edith Kreutner

The use of SAR dogs has a long history in the small alpine country of Austria. K-9 handlers are volunteers and belong to different SAR organizations. The largest and most well known organizations are the Red Cross, the Austrian Mountain Rescue Organization and the Austrian Rettungshundebrigade.

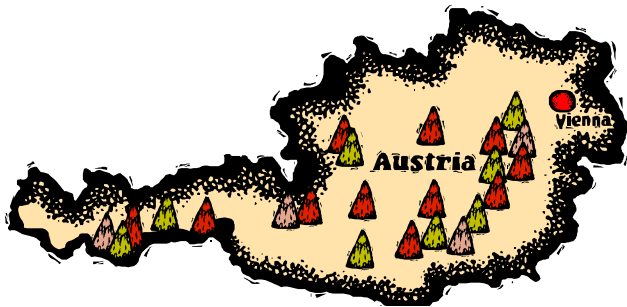
Traditionally, SAR dogs were only used for avalanche, area and disaster work. Cadaver and human remains detection is performed by the police K-9 squad, and water and trailing dogs are only slowly making their way into the Austrian SAR world.

Tradition is very important in Austria and many aspects of K-9 search work are heavily influenced by traditionalism. For decades, German shepherds were the dominant breed and only the last 15-20 years have seen other breeds as search dogs. In 2007, golden and Labrador retrievers, border collies and malinois were the most popular breeds next to the still very established German shepherd. There are no breed restrictions with any of the organizations and mixed breeds make up a high proportion of SAR dogs.

Austrian dog and handler teams are tested according to the International Rescue Dog Organization (IRO) regulations. These tests consist of three parts: the search, an agility test and an obedience examination. Many

foreign handlers see a close resemblance between Schutzhund tests and SAR dog examinations. Both consist of three parts and have strong similarities in the obedience section.

Generally speaking, these examinations are aimed more at competition and tournaments and are not a useful tool to determine mission readiness. Separate mission-ready tests are therefore often set in place by the individual organizations.



Due to the topography and climate conditions in Austria, avalanche and area search dogs are needed most often. Avalanches claim many lives each year and, despite all the technical devices that are at our disposal, the nose of our K-9 friends is still the greatest tool. Dogs working in alpine locations have to be able to work in and withstand harsh wintry conditions and accept all means of transport such as snow cats, lifts or running next to their handlers who are on cross country skis. As avalanche search dogs are often in the media and make headlines after successful searches, they are the most well known among all search dog disciplines.

Area search dogs and their handlers face other difficulties. Austria is very densely populated and because the woods and mountains are an Eldorado for hiking, mountain biking and other outdoor activities, there are no real wilderness areas as found in the US. The areas to be searched by each team are therefore smaller compared to American standards.

Disaster dogs for international missions are examined very carefully over the course of several days under extremely demanding conditions therefore the Austrian international K-9 SAR squad consists only of the very best disaster dogs and their skilled handlers.

Austrian dogs have helped to save lives all over the world. Among the international missions are places such as Izmit (Turkey), Bam (Iran), Taipeh (Taiwan) etc.

Austria can truly be proud of its many K-9 SAR teams and the public is comparably well informed about the great assets of search dogs and highly appreciates the work and effort of the search teams.

Edith Kreutner is a Fulbright Lecturer at Center Austria, a division of the University of New Orleans. Edith became involved in K-9 SAR ten (10) years ago with her now retired Labrador mix, Arco. The team was qualified for disaster and area search work and also enjoyed participating in other venues of dog sports such as obedience, tracking and agility. During her work and school related travels, Arco and Edith got the chance to meet handlers from numerous countries and could share their experiences on dog training and SAR work in general.

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