

Extract from:

The Police Dog: History, Breeds and Service

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Chapter 13

The Police Dog



Although intrusion alert and defense of the primitive band, farm or village were almost certainly canine functions from the beginning, at the dawn of the agricultural age, the formal police dog as we know it today is a relatively recent innovation, created in response to the Industrial Revolution and the consequent influx of farm labor for work in burgeoning industrial and urban areas. This process, commencing in the middle 1800s, caused radical changes in the way of life of much of Europe, particularly in nations such as England, Germany and Belgium where it originated and prospered.

As a consequence of this rapid industrialization the population gravitated to ever expanding cities, drawn from the countryside by the jobs of burgeoning urban industrial neighborhoods. Concurrent changes in rural areas, specifically labor saving innovations such as the tractor and other forms of mechanized farming, further encouraged this urban migration.

The replacement of sailing ships with steam powered vessels not only created the demand for shipbuilding and manufactured products; it made practical the large-scale importation of agricultural products such as mutton and wool, driving prices and domestic production inexorably down, greatly reducing and eventually eliminating the need for shepherds and their dogs in places such as Belgium and much of the rest of industrial Europe. This ongoing urbanization put ever-increasing demands on civil authorities for security, social order and law enforcement in an environment of expanding expectations of justice and civil liberty. A primary response to these needs was the evolution of the uniformed police patrol, which also created new roles for these displaced herding dogs.

Thus at the turn of the twentieth century, beginning in Belgium and then Germany¹, the police dog evolved to provide security and project authority for police

¹The precedence of the Belgian program is acknowledged by von Stephanitz:

officers on foot patrol in an era of rapidly expanding, rough and tumble working class neighborhoods. These concepts and programs, and imported dogs, soon began to spread to America and the rest of the world. In this era there were few motor vehicles and no radio communication; the urban law enforcement officer was generally alone and on foot, and thus vulnerable, especially at night. Prior to widespread street lighting especially, a good dog was an enormous enhancement to foot patrol officer security and effectiveness. Such a dog could routinely alert to hidden adversaries through the sense of smell, acute hearing and night vision, and provide physical deterrence as well as early warning. A strong dog projects fear and demands respect, and can deter an overtly violent conflict and thus affect a resolution short of a physical engagement.

Over the twentieth century the police dog role continually evolved, driven by societal change, advancement in firearm technology and availability, a transition to vehicle based deployment and the emergence of ever more effective two-way radio communication systems. The transition of police service from primarily foot patrol to vehicle-based deployment transformed police operations and necessitated a virtual reinvention of the police canine function. Indeed, the advent of the radio equipped police squad car in the early 1950's brought the initial era of the American police dog to an abrupt close, but in time also served as the foundation for a new service paradigm emphasizing the olfactory based search and substance detection capabilities.

Today security and deterrence remain as primary canine functions, but this is more often in situations of officer initiated contact, as in a building search or an active pursuit of a crime suspect, tasks without a direct civilian counterpart. Although relatively few contemporary officers walk a beat, patrol car or light truck based canine units are in ever-increasing demand for applications such as substance detection, criminal apprehension, building searches, tracking and officer security. Increasing emphasis on the olfactory capacity for substance detection, primarily drugs and explosives, resulting in the modern dual-purpose police dog, has driven canine deployment expansion in the past several decades, in military as well as police service.

Although the technology was slow to emerge, police use of radio communication for command and control has always employed advanced technology because of the enormous tactical advantage, immediate communication with officers in the field greatly extending the reach of law enforcement. In the early years vacuum tubes required voltages much higher than supplied by a vehicle battery and the installation of the equipment involved extensive modification to the vehicle. Nevertheless, experiments with broadcast or one-way radio began in the later 1920s and there were some tentative pre WWII implementations of prototype two-way radio systems. In this era radio communication was expensive, fragile and limited by the availability of suitable radio channels. WWII brought rapid technological advancement, such as the famous backpack "Walkie-Talkie" units carried by a combat infantryman, among many other consequences rendering the military messenger dog obsolete. Early systems utilized a single frequency both inbound and outbound and depended on a powerful base station with a good antenna installation to provide coverage¹ This meant that at any moment only a single officer could talk to a central dispatcher and

"The splendid experience when training our dogs, and the reports of the Press of Foreign Countries about the trials made with Belgian shepherd dogs in the Security Service of the Police, encouraged the SV, as early as 1901, to suggest similar trials to the German Police Administration." (von Stephanitz, 1925)p325

¹ Modern systems rely on multiple base station shared channel or trunking systems with much less radiated power per transmitter.

officer-to-officer communication was generally through repeat transmission by the dispatcher. Once out of the patrol vehicle the officer was on his own, beyond direct communication and thus much more vulnerable.

Police dog deployment strategy and radio communication advancements have always been intertwined. Although the transition to radio dispatched squad cars contributed to the demise of existing American canine programs after WWII, the reemergence of the police dog has been facilitated by modern communications systems which enable rapid deployment response and direct tactical, that is, officer to officer, communication. Radio equipped vehicle based canine teams can be dispatched as needed, making the service much more cost effective in that a few well managed canine patrol units can provide timely support throughout a city or district.¹

When firearms were expensive, unreliable and required great practice and skill to muzzle load for a single shot, the dog was a significant enhancement to offensive potential and a formidable weapon. Although revolvers had replaced muzzle-loading pistols, late in the nineteenth century the urban patrol officer was typically armed only with a club or baton and a whistle to sound an alarm or summon help. A good dog was an enormous step up in terms of offensive potential and officer security. But today in the age of high power semi-automatic firearms with enormous magazine capacity and quick reloading, the canine bite is a relatively low tech, secondary component of the police arsenal.

Social change as well as technical progress has had a profound effect on police canine training and deployment. In the early years the patrol officer – and his dog – had a relatively free hand; for the working class especially there was often little practical recourse for police actions and tactics. But over time the expanding expectation of legal and civil rights for all elements of society – rather than entrenched elites – made effective law enforcement strategy ever more complex and demanding. Today every police officer and police dog engagement is subject to intensive scrutiny by increasingly rights oriented civilians, and often such encounters are video recorded. It is an ongoing struggle for police dog breeding, training and deployment strategy to cope with these ever-expanding expectations.

In summary, the primary original motivation for the deployment of the police dog was enhancement of the personal security and effectiveness of the foot patrolman, generally unarmed, in an era before radio communication or even the street corner call box. Especially at night or in the rougher districts the presence of the dog provided security through physical deterrence and as a second set of eyes and ears to give warning of danger, buying the seconds that can make the critical difference in the outcome of an engagement. In an actual attack on an officer, the dog becomes a powerful adversary able to create diversion and encourage an aggressor to flee or submit to minimize his losses. The twentieth century would see enormous changes in police function in response to technological innovation and societal evolution. In order to survive and remain cost effective the police dog would take on new functions, unforeseeable in the beginning. But even today the enormous quickness, power and raw intimidation of the police dog remain fundamental to his utility and service.

¹ As a slightly ironic side note, my professional engineering career was with Motorola, the pioneering firm in the development of mobile police radio equipment, a key contributor to the effectiveness of the modern police patrol vehicle and thus in a way a contribution to the end of the inaugural era of American police canine service.

The Early Years

There are sporadic references to police style canine applications, emphasizing aggression and intimidation, going back to the Greek and Roman eras and even earlier. Among the earliest instances of more or less modern police deployment was provisional use of a few dogs for riot control in the German village of Hildesheim in 1886, conducted by Police Captain Schoenherr, who later became head of the Prussian governmental breeding program and the *Instruction School of Service Dogs* at Grunheide, near Berlin.¹



Ghent, Belgium. Circa 1907

rough neighborhoods and districts where maintenance of law and order was difficult. One officer and a good dog was much more cost effective than patrolling in pairs for reasons of security and safety. As shown in the photo, the dogs were often muzzled and provided protection from the elements. Contrary to most modern practice, in which the dogs generally live full time with their handlers, the dogs resided in a central kennel and were deployed on nightly foot patrol to enhance officer security and authority.

Photos from this era show a few much larger dogs with an apparent mastiff style background; these are unusual and do not seem to have persisted. Although Bouvier des Flandres registration would not commence in a serious way for another twenty years, photos show some of these Ghent dogs to be clearly in the Bouvier style, with others more of the Belgian Shepherd type.

The modern era of European police canine service and the police breeds emerged concurrently, with a tipping point in both Belgium and Germany at the turn of the twentieth century. Notable milestones include the first formal deployment program in Ghent, Belgium and the commencement of German Shepherd registration in Germany. Although these events have by accident of history – and the efforts of a couple of master public relations men – gained the lion's share of the historian's ink the movement was broad and inclusive, and prospered primarily because the time had come.

The first formal, full scale police canine operation was in Ghent², Belgium begun in 1899 under the direction of Chief Commissioner Ernest van Wesemael. This program began with ten Belgian herder style dogs, which increased to forty dogs the next year and then sixty night patrol dogs by 1908. (Vickery, 1984) The motivation was to enhance police officer security and authority in night patrol; increasing numbers of industrial workers naturally gravitated to and created

¹ (Humphrey & Warner, 1934) p3

² A problem in European nomenclature is that the spelling of geographical entities varies according to language. Ghent is the common English reference to the city which is Gent in Flemish, Dutch and German; the French would be Gand. Gent often appears in translations.



Bouvier style Ghent Police dog Circa 1899
Significant Bouvier des Flandres registration
would not commence for another
generation, after WW I in the 1920s

While the Ghent program is rightly regarded as the first, the reality is that this was an idea whose time had come and pioneers in several nations, especially Konrad Most, were rapidly moving in this direction. The Belgians were adept at promotion and publicity, as evidenced by the substantial written records, photographs and press coverage that have come down to us. Many departments around the world sent representatives to observe, and many went home with inspiration and young dogs, generally of the Belgian Malinois type. The Belgian cities of Antwerp, Mons, Bruges and Ostend among others quickly followed the example of Ghent by establishing their own programs, and a German Minister of the Interior sent a Police Commissary, whose favorable report encouraged German participation. (Chapman, *Police Dogs*, 1990) Several American departments, including New York City, South Orange, New Jersey and Muncie, Indiana are recorded as importing dogs from the Ghent program before 1910. (Vickery, 1984)

Sadly, this was very short lived. The Ghent program, and Belgian police breeding and deployment in general, were devastated during WWI; the invading Germans commandeered the Ghent kennel facility and ran it for their own canine program, taking what they wanted and in the end destroying much of what remained.

After the war the Ghent canine corps no longer existed in any recognizable form, and police administration was restructured without the night police as they had previously existed, allowing only a few dogs in service, which finally disappeared with the advent of motorized patrol. This situation persisted until 1979, when a new canine program began, originally using primarily German Shepherds, and there were even attempts to train dogs taken from the pound. (De Caluwe, 1995)

Somehow these references to German Shepherds serving in the Ghent, Belgium police force in the contemporary era did not at first seem to pass the common sense test, but Europeans with first-hand knowledge have verified this and I have 1985 photos of in uniform Ghent police handlers with German Shepherds. Today the Ghent canine unit is made up of Malinois, but the WWI German atrocity had pushed Belgian police agencies and the Malinois from the forefront for most of a century, even in homeland police canine programs.

If the Belgians were first the Germans were not far behind, being early and strong contributors to the modern police dog heritage. Colonel Konrad Most, a prominent German police trainer and administrator published his world famous *Training Dogs, a Manual* in 1910. Colonel Most had become active in police dog training in 1906 while serving as Police Commissioner at the Royal Prussian Police Headquarters located in Saarbrücken. In the years prior to WWII he was involved in government breeding and training operations in Berlin and developed methods and

deployment concepts for police patrol and tracking dogs. As an example, his elaborate experimental work and research provide the foundation of the crushed vegetation concept of tracking, the practical basis of most modern tracing. (Gerritsen & Haak, 2001)

During WWI Most served in high-level staff posts for the German Army and then in the period between the wars until 1937 was in charge of the Canine Research Department for the Army, and after WWII, toward the end of his life, was involved in training dogs for the blind.

It is fashionable in some quasi academic and play training circles to disparage Colonel Most, and implicitly Koehler, who is regarded as of the same school. Nevertheless, among serious people in the field there is an enormous amount of respect:

"Shortly after the turn of the century, and 28 years before the publication of *The Behavior of Organisms* (Skinner, 1938), an obscure dog trainer in Germany was busy discovering the basic principles of behavior and describing their application in training service dogs. Colonel Konrad Most, a police commissioner at the Royal Prussian Police Headquarters, anticipated many of Skinner's key concepts in his book. A pioneer in animal training, Most showed an understanding of the key elements of operant conditioning including primary and secondary reinforcement, extinction, shaping, fading, chaining, and negative conditioning (punishment). Most began training service dogs in 1906 while police commissioner in Saarbrücken. The Most book continues to be recognized as an authoritative source for canine training throughout Europe." (Burch & Pickel, 1990)

Perhaps even more telling, Humphrey and Warner, in their report on the famous Fortunate Fields project in Switzerland, an extensive research program into scientific working dog breeding, which evolved into the American Seeing Eye program of Dorothy Eustis, make extensive reference to the academic work of Colonel Most. (Humphrey & Warner, 1934)

The first formal police canine units in the United States were in New York City and South Orange, New Jersey beginning in 1907. Other early programs were in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, Detroit and Berkeley, California. (Chapman, *Police Dogs*, 1990) There were short-lived state police operations in Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

The New York program began in 1907 when the City Police Department sent Inspector George R. Wakefield to Paris and Ghent, Belgium in order to evaluate the practicality of setting up a canine operation of their own. Wakefield was apparently quite impressed with the Ghent program, actually going on patrol and observing training, and returned with five untrained year old Belgian Shepherds as a foundation for the incipient New York program.¹(Dyer, 1915)

In these years the New York canine program was quite active, with further imports of shepherd dogs from Belgium and a small number of Airedale terriers, augmented by various local acquisitions. The primary deployment was in relatively prosperous residential areas with a focus on the suppression of burglary and pushing muggers and thieves out of these neighborhoods. The dogs accompanied officers on

¹ It is interesting to note how frugal the beginnings were: The total cost of the trip and acquisition was \$364.84, which included \$50 for all five dogs; \$132 for fare to and from Belgium; \$48 for board; \$3 for cabs; \$25.60 for incidental expenses incurred while looking for the dogs; \$6.60 for three crates; \$50 for freight; \$10 for duty; and \$2.65 for a book on training police dogs.



New York police canine unit on parade, circa 1910.

foot patrol, often if not always muzzled, and working off lead to seek out potential criminals lurking in yards and allies.

The New York program was the most successful in America in this era, persisting through WWII in good and bad times from 1907 until 1951. According to Chapman, the end of the canine program coincided with the advent of the radio-equipped patrol car. While the dog had proven effective for the officer on the beat, the day of the canine unit incorporating a patrol vehicle was still in the future. New York would not resume canine service until 1982. (Chapman, *Police Dogs in America*, 1979)

As an interesting and revealing sidelight, from a 1911 newspaper report on the New York program:

"The canines were taught to trip a person by wrapping their front legs around one of the suspect's legs, grasping tightly and throwing the suspect to the ground. The dogs were then taught to pounce on the suspect and bark until an officer arrived."

(Chapman, *Police Dogs*, 1990)

Although our knowledge of deployment strategy and training in this era is incomplete, the available material indicates that the dogs were generally muzzled and often off lead in order to search away from the officer on foot, seeking out potential burglars, muggers or other such men. Most references talk of night patrol and although this might not have been universal it seems to have been the primary motivation for the police dog. The practice of muzzling the dogs was apparently to prevent inadvertent injury to upright citizens, since the dogs were often out of sight or direct physical handler control. This was a time with much less vehicular traffic or street lighting, providing more cover for the criminal and much less dangerous for the dog in terms of vehicle traffic. (Most of these comments, and the available reference material, have to do with the New York program. Other agencies may have had other strategies and policies.)

In general these American police dog programs were run on a shoe string: tentative, small and lacking in long-term significance. Obtaining backing to start a program was one thing, but each change in civilian or police administration required backing of the new office holders, which might drop a program to free up funds for other uses.



Dutch Police officer and dog, 1910.
Note sword on bike.

For three years after the close of the New York program in 1951, there were no known canine units in existence in America. This marked the end of the initial era of police canine service, one that never went beyond the provisional or experimental stage and in the overall scheme of things had only minor impact on police operations in general. In this early era only twelve cities and two states, predominantly east coast, had police canine units, often existing for only a year or two. Combining this with the fact that we had no military program in WWI and the abandonment of military canine operations in the general winding down after WWII and it becomes apparent that in terms of culture and capability America was simply not ready for the effective widespread deployment of canine units, either for the military or police service.

As a broad generality, the early European motivation for canine service was dogs in the rougher industrial districts, where the focus was on projecting authority and maintaining law and order, while in America there was more emphasis on deployment in more prosperous neighborhoods in order to deter and drive out the transient criminal

element, this resulting in more sensitivity to public perceptions of control and more benign force.

The British had pioneered the purebred concept and the elaborate, pretentious dog show, and many Europeans of the era tended to perceive the English breeds as the more fashionable and sophisticated. In Germany the general desire for police canine service became more compelling after about 1870; various types and styles of dogs, such as British Collies and Airedales, were put forth as candidates for police and military service.

But eventually the trend would be strongly to the herders, both in Germany and elsewhere, such as the German Shepherd and the various Belgian herding varieties such as the Bouvier, Groenendael and the Malinois. Even today, there is an occasional unusual breed, but the German Shepherds and Belgian Malinois predominate.¹ It must be kept in mind that these herding breeds simply did not exist in a formal way prior to about 1890 for the Malinois and 1900 for the German Shepherd. Certainly the foundation stock was at work in the fields, meadows and

¹ This is of course relevant to the general purpose patrol dog, many breeds, generally less aggressive, are used for search and rescue or single purpose drug, explosive and accelerant detection.

pastures, but somehow seemed invisible for the want of fancy kennel names and registration numbers written down in a sacred book.

In general the Germans believed implicitly that a police or military dog must be of a recognized formal breed. On the other hand the Belgians, in Ghent at least, as evidenced by the many photos, were from the beginning open to many sorts of regional dogs. Germany – young, evolving and stridently nationalist – apparently was excessively focused on racial purity even in this era. Even today these attitudes persist, for in order to compete in Germany, in IPO, a dog must have a valid FCI registration, while the Dutch police dogs are what they do on the field and while the Belgian NVBK dog must be registered, it is more or less a formality.

Although the origins of the Airedale are British, it was the Germans who actually pioneered the breeding and use of larger and more man aggressive specimens for military and police applications; and there was also a great deal of early German interest in the English Collie. This was in an era, before 1890, when the German Shepherd was unknown, his progenitors in obscurity, serving the shepherds in fields and meadows with the sheep.

There were a number of reasons for the eventual predominance of the herding breeds rather than the traditional Mastiffs or Molossers that had such a long history and evolution for area guarding and human aggression applications. The herders were of medium size and thus more economical and easy to maintain, yet capable of intimidating an adversary as required. Because they were generally with the herd year round in all weather, these dogs evolved coats, metabolism and structure well adapted to the outdoor life.

The energy, and thus the destructive power, of a projectile is proportional to the mass or weight multiplied by the square of the velocity. This means that doubling the muzzle velocity makes the destructive power four times greater. This is why modern military weapons, such as the M-16, employ a relatively light but high muzzle velocity projectile producing maximum destructive power with minimum weight. This allows the infantryman to carry many more rounds of ammunition.

In a similar way, the more intense medium size dog can be as intimidating and effective as a more massive dog, yet more agile in the chase or search and of greater endurance. Such a dog is more comfortable and adaptable to smaller vehicles and generally retains this physical fitness and agility to an older age, thus extending the effective service life of the dog. This can greatly increase the overall cost effectiveness of a program.

The herding dog heritage, especially in the tending style breeds, incorporates an instinctive sense that there is a time to disengage as well as engage, that it is the protection of the flock that is essential rather than simply the defeat of a particular predator. This is enormously useful in the control aspects of the police dog, such as the release on command and the call off. Just as the herd guardian needs to break off an engagement and allow a predator to flee so as to maintain herd security, the police dog needs to be able to disengage when the adversary is defeated or the handler intervenes. Police dog examinations generally require a dog to go to the bark and hold when the adversary halts and stands still rather than directly engaging, but in actual service this is often irrelevant in that few suspects are really going to lock up and stand still, the dog will in most instances find a reason to engage. Training and deployment strategy for suspect searches is a subject of ongoing debate and contention today, driven by political and public relations considerations as well as tactical realities.

Just as the police officer wears a uniform so as to be immediately identified by the general public, a relatively uniform and consistent appearance of his dog came to be regarded as important. Indeed, the ubiquitous use of the German Shepherd

throughout the world caused this breed to be known by many simply as the police dog, and for that reason alone is often the first choice in breeds. The Malinois, making great strides in deployment in Europe and America, is similar enough in appearance to the German Shepherd to be perceived by most people as a plausible police dog based on appearance. For this and various other reasons, other breeds are increasingly rare in mainstream police patrol dog service today.

The Scales of Justice

From the beginning police canine service was aggressively promoted, especially by various breed advocates such as von Stephanitz and the Doberman community. Much of this was straightforward and positive, but some of it was over the top and at times bordered on the outlandish. As an example, beginning in 1909 the SV¹ began offering a one Mark reward to the handler of a German Shepherd "solving" a homicide case, paying out 18 times over the next year and a half.²

These promotional efforts were generally well received and popular and thus effective, and police dog exploits, especially as involved in the solution of dramatic crimes, began to gain more and more press enthusiasm, especially when the exploits of a dog could be portrayed as "solving the case" through following a track or trail or selecting a perpetrator from among a group of candidates. There is, unfortunately, a long history, in Europe and America, of canine exploits being aided by indicating to the handler the expected end of the track, the presence of the drugs or the right man in the lineup.

But the role of the police is to exonerate the innocent as well as to apprehend and convict the guilty, and when public and press plaudits become a disproportionate driving force one thing can quickly lead to another. When a handler or police authority has a suspect in mind, or is under pressure to make an arrest, the dog can be cued and encouraged, unconsciously or maliciously, to select the "right man." Even today it is not uncommon for men to be released after many years in prison because police manipulation of evidence or a compelled false confession has been uncovered.

By 1913 this sort of a thing came to a head in Germany when controlled experiments, scientific investigation, notably by Konrad Most of the Berlin police, demonstrated that because of primitive training and handling, and enthusiasm for the arrest and press attention, rendered such results erratic and open to question. The Berlin police conducted these tests beginning in 1913, and then more extensively after the war. (Haak & Gerritsen, 2007)p28

Von Stephanitz, ever the public relations man, had a differing view:

"Even though, when the Government took up the question of the Police dog, Police Lieut. Most, (the well-known author of some papers on Training, who succeeded Major Klein), showed some biased unwillingness with regard to the use of the dogs in detective service³, this did no real harm; on the contrary, it gave an impetus to the work of all convinced believers in the possibilities of the service of the dog in this very respect." (von Stephanitz, 1925)p325

This remark, the only reference to Most in the 700 page book, is telling. Max von Stephanitz was not in the business of publicizing or promoting other breeds or

¹ German Shepherd club in Germany

² (Haak & Gerritsen, 2007)p26

³ Detective service here means searching, tracking, canine selection from a line up and other olfactory service.

sharing the limelight, and Konrad Most, an advocate of the Doberman, which he bred under the *von der Sarr* kennel name¹ and was active in demonstrations and seminars, and also the author of the most notable training book of the era, was a very important man. (See the biography of Most in an appendix.)



The German Shepherd dog was predominant in police service throughout the twentieth century.

Modern Deployment Strategies

As previously mentioned, by the early 1950s the American police dog – always a marginal factor in police service – had gone extinct, primarily because of the transition from foot patrol to mobile deployment and the advent of the radio dispatched patrol vehicle. Canine service would not reappear with any vigor until new needs and roles were identified and cost justified a decade or so later.

Ironically enough, the mobility and reach of the radio dispatched patrol vehicle would in coming years enable a new paradigm, where rather than supporting an individual officer on a beat a vehicle based canine team would respond – quickly be where needed – often in minutes. In principle such teams provide backup and ancillary services, such as

drug detection or building search potential, to every officer on the street, rather than just those with a dog of their own. This has proven to be a remarkably successful and cost effective strategy.

As police programs gradually began to reemerge in the later fifties and especially the sixties, there were new priorities and missions. One of these was crowd control, but police excesses in responding to civil rights conflicts, particularly in the American South, ultimately had a negative impact, causing a second major downturn in the use of the police canine, with many units curtailed or eliminated entirely because of adverse public perception and reaction. Police oppression is never pretty, and snarling dogs and fire hoses on American streets came to be emblematic of an ugly chapter in our history. In retrospect this was a major setback in American canine deployment, for the strategy and motivation simply did not match up with the realities of the time, training and discipline were insufficient and most importantly media driven public perception was increasingly negative.

The Vietnam war was a turning point, marked the advent of an era of expansion, a revival of police canine service. There were several factors leading to this:

- Military canine service in Vietnam had been and was perceived as very effective.
- The level of press and television coverage had generated a great deal of public awareness and acceptance.
- Illegal drug distribution was coming to be perceived as serious national priority, and drug detection had proven effective in Vietnam.

¹ (Schmidt, 1935)

Many experienced veterans, including canine handlers and trainers, were reentering the civilian workforce. Although very few of the dogs returned¹ the knowledge and experience necessary to identify, acquire and train effective dogs provided a foundation for a reemerging police canine service.

Although the original roles of officer security and criminal apprehension remained, they became secondary to the use of the remarkable olfactory, hearing and night vision capabilities, enabling the dog to seek out the hidden or unexpected adversary or those lost and in need of help. Tracking and area searches, especially building searches, which had been an incidental or secondary function from the beginning, took on more and more importance.

Beyond this, substance detection, primarily drugs and explosives or bombs, brought an entirely new dimension to the utility of the police canine. In the perception of mainstream middle America drug usage emerged from the exotic neighborhoods of New York and San Francisco in the post-Vietnam era to become a primary focus of law enforcement, a crusade ideally matched to police canine capabilities. Subsequent to the Vietnam War searching for hidden substances such as drugs, fire scene accelerants, cadavers or explosives became the driving force behind the expansion of police canine units.

Thus while citizen and officer security retains high priority during an actual engagement, today the primary function, and cost justification, has tended to be oriented to search and substance detection. Because of the specialized nature and extensive, time-consuming training the modern canine team normally serves as a resource for the entire city or district. The mobile canine team is typically deployed on routine patrol, but available to be dispatched by radio to support any other unit, that is provide a drug search, backup in a confrontation or building search.

Thus in a way, since most officers do not have a dog, protection has become an ancillary or secondary role in conjunction with the search and detection services. Of course, a successful area or building search will often result in an arrest, and the presence of the dog can be a significant factor in maintaining control and in the worst case of an attack on the handler the dog can come to his aid. The dog is generally trained to respond to a direct attack on his own initiative, without specific command of the handler. This self-initiated defensive response is of course the natural instinct of a good patrol dog, carefully nurtured through breeding selection and training. But it is a double-edged sword, and the handler must provide the tactical oversight and control to avoid putting the dog in the position of making an inappropriate engagement in circumstances that he cannot be expected to comprehend.

Upon arrival at a crime scene, the perpetrator is unlikely to step forward, politely make introductions and offer his hands to be cuffed. Especially if not in plain sight, he is a potential danger to the officer and others present; a dog can very effectively search the immediate area to detect and perhaps apprehend a suspect. Once the scene is secured, it is the function of the police officer to gather evidence necessary for a successful prosecution. Here again the dog can be an effective aid, bringing attention to small objects such as a gun casing or shell, hidden in the grass or elsewhere. In the Dutch police trials, one exercise involves dropping two small metal objects, such as a coin or machine screw, in a grass area approximately ten by thirty meters. The dog must on his own search to find both objects and bring them to the handler. The same grass area is used by all of the dogs participating in the trial. (An alternative practical protocol might be to have the dog indicate the article so that it could be examined and perhaps photographed in the original setting.)

¹A shameful episode of our military history to be covered in the next chapter.

A fundamental reality of police operations is that the normal reaction of the criminal when the police arrive on scene, or at the end of a car chase, is to flee on foot, sometimes with dramatic helicopter news coverage. If the subject can get out of sight, even for a few moments, he can often disappear into the city streets or countryside and thus be out of reach, with the potential to commit further crimes. If he goes into hiding, he is likely in familiar territory and has the potential to wait out the police.

The police dog can be extremely effective in such situations, outrun and bring down the fleeing man or quickly locate and detain a suspect hiding in a field or a ditch. Wall climbs and broad jumps are part of all training and trial regimens in recognition of the fact that agility in the chase is fundamental to the realities of the patrol function. When the suspect gets out of sight even for a few moments the pursuing officer is in danger of failing in the chase, for there are so many places the man could have gone, but the dog uses his nose as well as his eyes and ears and quickly takes the right path. A man fleeing an officer alone can go to ground, hide almost any place, and have a chance of remaining quiet and leaving later, but a handler and dog team is likely to go directly to the hiding suspect. Even when the fleeing suspect has been gone for minutes or even hours the patrol dog can often track him down and apprehend him or show where he has gone.

Aggression and Discipline

In the early years of canine deployment aggression was the primary persona of the police dog from the perspective of the street officer, the suspected criminal and the public at large. Enhancement of foot patrol security and projected authority was the essence of the original justification in terms of cost effectiveness and of law and order. Although search and substance detection roles have taken on increasing importance in recent years, and justified much of the rapid expansion of canine service, most police dogs today are dual purpose and retain an important aggressive role. Part of this role is based on the psychological impact in that the presence of the dog quite often is enough to deter confrontation and allow the officer to diffuse a disturbance or affect an arrest. Just as the side arm is most successful when never actually discharged, the effectiveness of the police dog is greatest when deterrence resolves the situation without a physical altercation. In order to achieve these ends in a society increasingly sensitive to the legal and civil rights of all citizens, the dogs must be stable and under reliable handler control. To achieve this takes effort at every level, that is in breeding and selection, training, and deployment policy and strategy.

The aggressive potential of the police dog was always a two edged sword; the innocent and fearful as well as the guilty and aggressive can be intimidated and subdued as well as injured or disabled. An imposing physical presence and assertive demeanor served as an effective deterrent from the beginning; it was primarily a man and his dog against the criminal elements in an era with less emphasis on esoteric criminal rights, where the idea of lower class criminals going to court to sue for damages, civil rights or discrimination would have seemed absurd – what happened on the street more or less stayed on the street. But these days are gone, and that is a good thing. Today all elements of society are more aware of the legal limitations to police authority, civil rights and recourse to the courts.

Aggressive, rights oriented media, the ubiquitous potential for video recording and a generation of emphasis on civil rights have required increasing sophistication, restraint and self-control in police work. This is especially true of canine patrol because the original function of the police dog was largely intimidation and aggression; the snarling, lunging dog on the end of the lead had become embedded in the folklore. For all of these reasons the focus of canine selection, training and

deployment needs to be on the stability and control of the dog, and the handler. If and when the subject becomes willing to surrender the likelihood of the inadvertent bite or excessive suspect injury needs to be minimized through the handler's ability to restrain or recall the dog as the situation warrants.

Just as there are detailed incident reports whenever a sidearm is discharged or even displayed, canine bites almost always require a detailed incident report, including photographs of associated wounds. The primary purpose is to provide documentation in the event of defendant court action, and as an internal record for review. There are strategies and protocols according to departmental policy, one often being that photos for the records are always taken subsequent to hospital or emergency treatment when the wounds are cleaned and spattered blood is removed; even the most vile criminal can be painted as vulnerable and pathetic, and thus deserving of leniency. Unfortunately, court decisions can be based as much on emotional response as relevant facts, especially when a jury is involved. Beyond the specific incident, these records are necessary for statistical purposes, as abnormal numbers of gunshot or dog bite instances or outcomes can indicate problems in training, officer discipline or deployment strategy.

In this era of criminals with arsenals of heavy duty, rapid-fire weapons, organized crime, ubiquitous inner city street gangs and widespread substance abuse confrontations or crime scenes can quickly escalate, requiring effective planning and strategy to maintain security and order in our cities. SWAT¹ teams with elaborate firearms, support systems and other modern technology and tactics have been adapted to cope, requiring effective training, strategy and tactical leadership to maintain control and resolve a situation with minimal violence. Police dogs have often had a significant role in this, and just as police officers are selected and trained with great care the dogs must also be especially well bred, evaluated and then trained.

In America virtually every sworn officer is armed, and when the canine team arrives on scene there is likely at least one ally already present, the requesting officer. In such tactical situations effective handler control of the dog becomes paramount, which demands effective discipline. The first priority is that the dog be under sufficient control so as not to be a hazard for already on the scene police personnel, be part of the solution rather than part of the problem because of a lack of control: a dog escaping and going in search of an adversary on his own is likely to become the highlight of the evening news, not generally good public relations.

Although it is unusual, every police encounter involving physical conflict has the potential to escalate into a serious confrontation. The resulting potential for confusion, unforeseen circumstances and collateral damage – the fog of war – can arise in many ways. The dog may perceive another officer or uninvolved civilian as an adversary and engage, causing injury and disrupting ongoing operations. The handler or dog may be injured, incapacitated or even become a fatality. Other police dogs may be present.

Discipline and control is created and maintained in multiple reinforcing layers. The first level of control is the decision to deploy, that is when to make the dog present. Normally the dog is confined in a cage built into the back seat of the patrol car or the back section of a light truck. There are circumstances such as heavy vehicular traffic or crowd engagements where the potential benefits of deployment are outweighed by hazard to the dog, the possibility of inappropriate aggression or negative physiological effect on ordinary citizens or possible violators.

¹ Special Weapons and Tactics

Vehicle containment requires careful management, as the temperature can very quickly rise on a warm day, with possible fatal consequences. The primary responsibility for the well-being of the dog is with the handler, who must be constantly aware of the circumstances when out of the vehicle. The sad fact is that every year police dogs die because their handler did not care enough to adequately monitor the physical well-being of his canine partner; dogs are with distressing frequency left to die in an overheated vehicle. In order to minimize this danger, ancillary air conditioning and ventilating capability is normally provided in the vehicle. Another safeguard is often an automatic temperature alert system which will detect and report overheating by way of the police radio communication system or other media. Normally cold weather is not a problem; the dog is entirely safe and comfortable in the vehicle in spite of extreme cold; he is dry and sheltered from the wind, and came from ancestors in north central Europe who normally were in the fields with the stock in the winter months.

Once the dog is actually deployed, taken out of the vehicle, primary control is the leash, and sometimes a muzzle. On leash the dog is immediately available, is sometimes an effective deterrent and is under direct handler control. The leash is sometimes replaced by a long line, ten meters (30 ft.) or even more, usually in some sort of a search context. The long line is very often snapped to a ring between the shoulders of a harness, which allows the dog to pull into it without interfering with breathing. (The normal six-foot leather leash is usually attached to a collar.)

The final and most critical level of control is the obedience of the dog, training allowing the handler to restrain the dog by voice or hand signal. When the dog is sent after a distant or fleeing person, he is trained to respond to a handler recall command by either returning or going to a down but alert posture. This is one of the primary advantages of the police canine: he is less than deadly force in that even when there is an engagement, the subject is bitten, his life is usually not endangered, and if there are new circumstances after sending the dog, as in the handler reevaluating the send decision, the object going out of sight or another person appearing in the field of view the dog can be recalled.

The primary reason that modern police dogs have evolved from the herding breeds, specifically the tending style dogs such as the Belgian and German Shepherds, is that the function of the dog was the preservation of the flock or herd rather than the defeat of the predator, such as a marauding wolf. When the predator has been forced to cease the immediate, direct threat the instinctive action is to allow escape and remain with his charges rather than pursuing. Wolves hunt in packs, and are perfectly capable of employing part of the group to draw off the guardian dogs, leaving the stock alone and unguarded, at the mercy of the other wolves. (As explained fully in the first chapter, the herding functionality of these dogs is substantially different from the Border Collies which typically come to mind as herding dogs.) Historically, wolf eradication was the function of entirely different sorts of dogs, sight hounds such as the Russian or Irish Wolfhounds, now existing mostly as nonfunctional recreations or replicas.

The point is that the police patrol dogs evolved within a venue where the potential for control and limitation on aggression comes from within the dog, as when the herding dog repels the wolves or other predators but breaks off the engagement, remains with his herd, when they disengage and retreat. Such dogs are easier to control and train because of this instinctive tendency disengage when the adversary yields rather than to fight to a conclusion regardless of consequences or external handler command. The police dog needs to be agile, quick and amenable to control rather than just large, powerful and aggressive, which is why he is drawn from among specialized tending or herding dogs rather than powerful mastiff style dogs or swift, relentless sight hounds such as the wolf or deerhounds. Just as a good

police officer has the potential of both aggression and restraint, his dog must share these qualities, this balance.

Modern technology is increasingly used to provide assistance for control and safety. Many canine patrol vehicles are equipped with a radio-controlled device allowing the release of the dog from a distance as needed. This is of course a very critical decision, for releasing the dog when on a traffic stop gone wrong puts the dog in danger from oncoming traffic, such a decision must weigh the benefit the dog can provide against the danger to the dog and others.

Sometimes the use of radio-controlled collars extends beyond training to actual patrol service to enhance control under the stress of engagement. While an increasing trend, such electronic aids are never perfect, can fail or run out of battery capacity at the wrong moment. The officer likely has a communication radio and a drawn pistol to deal with, and additional devices increase the chance of a mistake or accident. Reliance on the remote collar to overcome disobedience in the dog, lax training or generally weak discipline can be of serious concern. If control of the dog is dependent on the device any one of several eventualities has the potential to produce a bad outcome. The device may simply fail at the wrong moment, run out of battery capacity for instance, the handler may drop or lose the controller or be incapacitated, shot or otherwise injured. The result of any of these eventualities may be an uncontrolled and likely highly excited dog loose on the scene.

A police dog engaging another police officer is unfortunately not an uncommon occurrence, and can be very disruptive operationally and cause serious injury or disability and the consequent great expense. Other officers shooting an out of control police dog sometimes becomes necessary, or a poorly trained or frightened officer may shoot a dog when the situation could have readily been dealt with using less extreme methods.

In the event of an incapacitated handler, other police personnel on the scene must deal with his dog, which will very often be in an extreme and somewhat unpredictable emotional state. If actually engaged in a search the dog may continue, and thus require control, or he may become very defensive of his downed handler, a situation others must deal with in order to come to the aid of the man down. In extreme cases, the dog may be shot to regain control, always a tragic outcome.

The reality is that police dogs are expendable, sometimes put in harm's way to preserve the life of a human being. Injuries to the dog, very serious in and of themselves, also can pose immediate problems in that the injured dog has the potential to become indiscriminately aggressive. The need to secure the dog and provide medical assistance can greatly disrupt the ongoing tactical situation. This is an especially difficult situation if both the handler and his dog are injured and the dog must be secured by other personnel.

In the ideal every person in the department with the potential to be on scene needs to understand the potential and limitations – and hazards – inherent in the dog. If the handler is incapacitated, other police personnel need to be able to step in and stabilize the dog, and perhaps further its utilization. In particular, those in the chain of command need to understand the potential and limitations of the canine teams so as to utilize them most effectively and safely. Training for these realities is an inherent cost that needs to be factored into the decision to build and maintain a police canine program.

Pistols and squad cars are commodities, essentially interchangeable and quickly obtainable as needs change or losses occur. Police dogs are not commodities; each one is different and distinct and must be put in the right situation with an effective handler in order to realize his full potential. Bad decisions can lead to bad outcomes and legal, administrative and political ramifications. The assertive, powerful,

impulsive dog must be matched with a handler physically and psychologically capable of standing up to the dog and being in command. The best dog for the late night factory or warehouse search in an industrial district may not be an ideal selection for a lost child search. Good canine unit leadership, planning and policy are just as essential as good dogs and handlers. Tactical decision makers, including watch commanders and dispatchers, need to have some comprehension of these issues, and the experience of the handlers needs to be part of the deployment decision-making process.

Once engaged, the canine handler has the ultimate responsibility to foresee circumstances where the aggressive potential of his dog, selected for in breeding and enhanced in training, will lead to inappropriate intervention, and provide the necessary restraint, control and discipline. Establishing and maintaining an effective, reliable, safe police canine operation is a demanding and expensive process. This requires effective, responsible canine officers and strong dogs, but even more fundamentally good leadership all the way up the chain of command to ensure the acquisition of appropriate dogs, effective training programs and appropriate deployment policy and tactical leadership.

Scent Work: Search and Detection

Over many years the persona of the police dog was the aggressive dog, the German Shepherd or Doberman biting the man in the protection suit and projecting fear and respect for the law in the criminal elements; the excitement of the chase, an active guard or the physical engagement where the perpetrator is bitten and subdued.

But this is a distorted and increasingly obsolete perspective in that the olfactory



KNPV line Dutch import Malinois tracking and evidence search exercise with new police handler. Notice nose pushed deeply into the grass. Instructor Rik Wolterbeek on right.

capability, the ability to search, track, find evidence and detect substances such as drugs, explosives or accelerants, is in reality of more intrinsic importance and utility than the potential for overt aggression. If German Shepherds and Malinois were not capable of searching or substance detection, were one-dimensional pursuit and bite machines, they would be of much less practical utility, and the police canine service as it exists today would be much less prevalent and much less fundamentally useful. And more to the point, enormously less cost effective.

As discussed in more detail in the chapter on scent work, there is a distinction between tracking, which is the systematic following of the surface or vegetation disturbance caused by the footsteps of the person, and trailing where the actual personal odor is the focus and the nose tends to be carried higher and

focused on the air scent as well as near ground body odor. The tracking dog is focusing on the actual damage to vegetation or changes to the surface and is characterized by the nose very close to the surface, often probing each footstep. Trailing, typical of many Bloodhound scenarios, involves the dog sniffing the air for indications of the actual body scent of the person. The trailing dog may at times be many yards or meters away from the actual path of the person. Although sport scenarios such as the Schutzhund tracking exercise are purely tracking, often in practical situations there is overlap with the dog following ground disturbances and airborne scent according to circumstances, perhaps alternating modes according to circumstances during a particular search. Although the practice may not be universal, my observations of imported KNPV dogs, already familiar with free searching, being prepared for American service involve the new handler teaching the dog a bit of formal tracking similar to the Schutzhund work, sometimes interspersed with off lead object searches involving several objects.

The patrol dog such as the German Shepherd is sometimes initially trained strictly for tracking, as in the Schutzhund trial. The dog learns to indicate any objects with the scent of a person, such as a billfold or weapon, which are possible clues and potential evidence. Such dogs, if solid trackers, in general readily convert to a more varied style appropriate to police applications.

In reality, under the pressure of the search, the distinction between tracking and trailing tends to become blurred and the dog does what the dog needs to do, and the function of the handler is to decide how much direction and restraint can be given without discouraging and impeding the dog. In practice, a tracking or trailing process can evolve into an area search, where the dog may circle and when coming down wind of a hidden person or object go directly to the source rather than following out the trail. Generally the handler wants to discourage this and only allow it when the track is actually lost, in which case a wider search might possibly find either the person or a point from which tracking can be resumed.

The typical dual-purpose police dog has outdoor search, tracking or trailing capability in addition to his drug detection and building search capabilities. When the need arises on a crime scene or in response to a missing person report the dog on the street is the most immediately available asset and if time is of the essence this is likely the dog that will do the job. If a crime subject has been seen fleeing time most definitely is of the essence in that the suspect typically is highly motivated to be long gone by the time the dog approaches. The distinction between pursuit and trailing may tend to blur when the distance is short and closing.

When there is more time, it is often desirable to bring in specialist dogs and handlers. Reports of missing persons, such as overdue hikers or people failing to show up at an expected time and place, are often deferred because of a lack of sufficient indication of illegal activity or immediate physical danger. When the search dog is brought in several hours later, the scent is likely to be much older and confused by other activity in the search area. In such instances, specialist police teams, sometimes Bloodhounds, or volunteer search and rescue organizations may be the most appropriate choice.

The street patrol dog accustomed to building search operations is increasingly likely to be trained in an active search and bite or engage mode or at least accustomed to an aggressive encounter at the end of his search. Such dogs are from the police breeds where aggression is a fundamental part of the breeding heritage, and a certain amount of aggression is necessary to make the cut in the selection process. Such dogs are problematic, to say the very least, when searching for an innocent civilian, potentially an especially vulnerable child with a mental disability or a confused or senile older person. Although some agencies do not permit such patrol dogs to search in these circumstances because of the danger to the subject and the

enormous legal liability, sometimes the dog at hand is used on a very short lead and with close up assisting personnel as available. This is a compromised situation in search effectiveness as well as danger and liability, as the tightly constrained dog can only cover a small fraction of the area an off lead search and rescue specialist dog could. Every situation is different and tactics must be dictated according to the potential benefits and liability, which is only one of the reasons that police command personnel need to know as much as possible about specific canine capabilities and potential, so as to make the best possible decision in conjunction with the handler.

One of the most difficult challenges for the police handler is the search subject heavily under the influence of alcohol or drugs, prescribed or illicit, whose actions are unpredictable and may strike out in irrational violence or flee or conceal themselves out of fear or guilt. Such people may illicit unpredictable reactions from the dog, who has been bred and trained to respond to aggression with aggression, which can come in many and diverse forms. Foreseeing such reactions and maintaining control and insuring safety and security for all is one of the most difficult challenges the canine handler, or any police officer, can take on.

A related service is scent discrimination, that is a process in which a dog sniffs an article suspected of being touched or owned by a perpetrator at a crime scene and then having the dog pick a suspect out of a lineup. Just as drug dogs can give false indications because of overt or unintentional handler cuing, canine criminal identification needs to be subject to rigorous standards of training and procedure. Unfortunately, police and prosecuting attorney corruption, convicting men with false testimony and other illegal means, has extended to canine service where prior knowledge is supplied to the dog handler, who produces the desired indication or trailing result. The canine team is subject to this, since the handler "reads" his dog in ways that are not generally apparent to observers; if the handler says his dog has made an indication it is difficult to contradict, and if he has been called in specifically to make the indication the temptation to encourage or perceive the right response is ever present. Such things have been the subject of much litigation, and the courts are gradually establishing rules and procedures to protect individual rights and ensure honest police work while maintaining a framework for effective police investigation and crime solving. This balance is among the most difficult to strike and maintain in a free and democratic society, but it also the most important: unbiased scales of justice are the foundation of our civilization and national integrity.

The Building Search

The building search is one of the most common and useful tasks performed by the police dog. When an alarm system results in a call to a nighttime warehouse or similar place of business, without a dog it is difficult and time consuming to determine if someone is actually present, the level of threat and most importantly their actual location or hiding place. Most of the night could be spent searching a larger warehouse or production facility without finding a person, and almost no matter how much time is spent it can never be certain that nobody was or is lurking. Furthermore, it is easy to bypass a hidden person, allowing him to slip out and escape or attack from the rear.

When an intruder is in or suspected to be hidden in a warehouse or place of business, the most desirable outcome is surrender in response to the called out "Police. Come out or we will send the dog!" The senior police tactical leader, often the handler, perhaps alone, is never certain who is in there: it can range from a fifteen-year-old kid on a prank to an armed psychopath perfectly willing to die in order to take an officer with him. Increasingly common use of dangerous, diverse drugs, legal and illegal, and alcohol mean that rational decisions cannot be assumed; totally rational, stable people very seldom wind up hiding in a warehouse. The

subject has the potential to become incredibly, irrationally and unpredictably violent and dangerous. He may also be armed with an array of high power, large magazine capacity weapons.

Men search primarily by sight, with a lesser likelihood of hearing something, and are at a tremendous disadvantage to a dog, which will rely primarily on his nose. There are thousands of places to hide, but the odor, confined in the building, often leads the dog directly to the hidden person. You can hide your body, but it is extremely difficult to conceal or mask your scent, and most of the search subjects will not understand how the dog is working or how to evade detection. A good dog will quickly find a hiding person, enabling the police officers to make the apprehension in relative safety; having a barking dog in your face or on your arm tends to make it obvious where you are and distract you from running or the effective use of a weapon. And as a bonus, calling out "Police, come out or we will send the dog" accompanied by enthusiastic barking can often produce the most desirable outcome, a nonviolent surrender, with very little risk. Although it should always be policy to emphasize the control of the dogs and the reluctance to deploy them, a well-established reputation for police dog enthusiasm on the street enhances the likelihood of surrender rather than the need for an apprehension.

Searching is a demanding and often difficult task with many variations. The search can be for a known felon or a likely suspect, but also for a lost child, a drunk or a disoriented elderly or impaired person. A search area can include city streets, warehouses, rural fields or forests and involve water in the form of ponds, rivers and lakes. Part of the training of every Dutch Police dog, for instance, involves working in water with object retrieval and directed stream crossings.

The aggressive patrol dog may not be the ideal choice to search for a lost child, but the search might of necessity be initiated by an experienced handler exercising tight control of the dog because time is of the essence. Volunteer search and rescue units provide noble service in many contexts throughout the world, and are most effective when there is good liaison and cooperation between police administration and volunteer unit leadership to insure that the right dog or dogs deploy in the right places and at the most opportune times. But when time is critical, as in the instance of following a trail from a crime scene or a child or elderly person wandering off in severe weather, either a trained dog on the force is going to do the search or the opportunity is going to be lost.

Beginning the 1980's and 90's there was a vigorous ongoing debate on training and tactics for the patrol dog search. The traditional doctrine had tended to support what is known as a find and bark or find and guard strategy, in which the dog was trained to bark vigorously at the discovered subject as long as he remained passive and motionless. This is the normal procedure in sport and trial programs such as Schutzhund and KNPV and tended to be perceived by the public, and many politicians and senior administrators, as the obviously correct approach. The find and bark advocates argue that being the subject of a search does not convict one of a crime, and that the dog might find a child, a sleeping night watchman or other sorts of people with any number of perfectly legitimate reasons for being in the search area. Proponents of the find and bark have included men such as long-term Chicago Police training director Ken Burger who argue convincingly that the liability of a find and attack strategy is inherently disproportionate force and ultimately going to lead to serious liability problems in the courts. (Burger, 1991)

The alternative strategy, the so-called find and bite model, expects the dog to engage immediately anyone found in a search. The proponents argue that it is much more practical and realistic to teach the dog to engage directly because this is his natural propensity and it is more of a deterrent to the criminal element. They further

argue that if the man has a weapon, especially a gun, the bark and hold dog is simply being set up to be shot.

The vulnerability of the dog to a weapon in the hands of the found person is a risk that the handler and his supervisors need to evaluate on a case-by-case basis. The hard reality is that a primary reason for the dog is that he is expendable; sometimes he must be put at risk in the interests of officer security and safety. Searching on a lead rather than free is an option where the subject is likely to be dangerous, but on the other hand a potential impediment to the mobility and quickness of the search.

The key defect in the find and guard or find and bark strategy is that in training the helper is a confident, secure man with protective clothing and a padded arm or heavy bite jacket. The man is in no real danger and under no real stress, he is in control of this situation, or should be. The guard and bark is under tight discipline from both the handler and the helper. But on the street the object person is going to be fearful, armed, aggressive, inebriated, incapacitated or any combination of these things. The subject in most instances is simply not going to be able to stand quietly facing the dog, and this is going to cause even the best trained and disciplined dog to engage. Find and bark is, in many credible minds, the wrong strategy because on the street it simply does not work.

A second, and perhaps more telling, consideration is that handlers under the illusion that their dog will refrain from a bite are much more likely to send him in a situation where encountering an entirely innocent and vulnerable person, such as a child or an elderly person, is possible or even likely, often with a bad ending.

The find and guard procedure is universal in the dog sport world because it demonstrates admirable control, is enormously good public relations, and because the intensity of the guard reveals much about the dog's drive and character. The problem is that higher-level politicians and police administrators – sometimes lacking in general canine experience or the realities of on the street canine work – find the perceived public relations value of the find and bark scenario irresistible and embrace it in spite of the underlying reality.

An increasing majority of the most experienced and qualified trainers and handlers believe that a police dog sent to search is almost certainly going to engage, and if this is not an acceptable tactical and legal risk in a specific situation then the handler or senior person present needs to refrain from sending the dog or decide to search with the dog on line or otherwise restrained so as to allow the handler to make the ultimate decision to engage. Hopefully all of these training time and effort resources are going to enhance realistic control aspects, such as reliable call offs under practical, stressful circumstances.

That said, there remain experienced, credible trainers and handlers that advocate the find and bark. Some argue that the find and bite is encouraged by brokers and commercial trainers because it easier to train, and because it can conceal weakness in the dog. This has been one of the most contentious and passionately argued issues in police canine work over many years.

My personal experience is Schutzhund, and I well know the time and effort that goes into training the guard exercise. As a breeding suitability exercise this gives insight into the intensity of the dog and the trainability, the potential for handler control. But at some point a reality check becomes necessary, the realization that it is past time for IPO to be reevaluated, to introduce into the program exercises such as a KNPV style distant call off and release commands when engaging the decoy. IPO desperately needs to edge back closer to the real world. Unfortunately, those in control seem to be oblivious to this need, are satisfied to see the program become

more and more stylized and out of touch with real world police canine applications in terms of training and breeding.

The War on Drugs

In America, the war on drugs has been a primary driving factor in the expansion of police canine deployment. The proliferation of illicit drugs, such as the narcotics, and related crime, emerged during and subsequent to the Vietnam War era. As a high school student in the late 1950s and collegiate undergraduate in the 1960s marijuana was associated in our minds with exotic Jazz clubs and the heroin or opium user was envisioned as the unimaginably deprived "dope fiend," but none of us had ever met one. Although as engineering students we would likely have been the very last to know, I was never aware of anyone known personally to be involved; it was another, hardly imaginable, world. As the last generation prior to the flood of baby boomers we were on the cusp of change in so many ways.

In the intervening years drug usage has exploded into every segment of society and commences at ever-younger ages, even in our grade schools. It has filled our prisons, with the highest percentage of incarceration in the world, largely with minor, nonviolent offenders who would otherwise mostly be paying taxes rather than being transformed into real criminals in our prison system. The international scope of illegal drug operations has been a major challenge to law enforcement agencies, and transformed American police service. It is a war we are not winning, and probably cannot win without transforming our nation into an oppressive, heavy-handed police state.

This ever expanding use of narcotics and other illicit drugs has been an extraordinarily difficult law enforcement challenge for half a century, and the burgeoning use of the police canine has expanded in lock step as a counter measure. Well-trained detection dogs have emerged as a first line of defense, particularly at international borders and in searching vehicles suspected of transporting hidden drugs. A good dog can move quickly down a line of a hundred bags in the luggage area of an airport and focus in on the one with the drugs or find the vehicle with the drugs at a traffic stop or in line at a border. In general most experienced trainers and handlers believe the ideal situation to be the single purpose detection dog, selected strictly according to the search and alert potential and trained with a complete focus on this specific role. In many situations, such as an airport or other point of entry, there is more than enough work to occupy a handler for a full shift daily; making the dedicated dog a practical solution. Such dogs can be smaller and more agile for searching the cargo bay of an airliner, a warehouse or any other confined space. The candidate pool is significantly larger than for the dual-purpose dog; the breed and individual can be selected strictly according to the prey or food drive for the search and other desirable physical and character attributes. Candidates not making the cut as a patrol dog can often become excellent dedicated detection dogs.

Because of formal educational requirements, demanding physical fitness levels, firearms qualification, emotional stability and other cognitive and character attributes, the fully sworn police officer is, and should be, a highly qualified and relatively expensive asset. The handler of the dedicated drug dog can be a specialist, with simpler and less comprehensive qualifications, and thus much less expensive in terms of training and ongoing cost. Such a person need know only how to handle and care for the dog in a very specific, limited set of circumstances.

The single purpose drug detection dog is thus much more cost effective not only because of the potentially increased efficacy, but also because both the dog and especially the handler can be less expensive to acquire or recruit, train and pay or maintain. The actual drug find is most likely to occur where there is backup immediately available, in the form of onsite or nearby police personnel, to make any

necessary arrest and process prisoners, or where there is not a potentially threatening person present, as in a baggage area or loading dock search. The handler need not be capable of controlling and motivating a highly aggressive dog; the dogs can be more easily dealt with by others and perhaps kenneled on site, further increasing cost effectiveness.

Proponents of the single purpose dog point out that the dual-purpose dog will always involve compromise in selection, training and deployment strategy, which by definition means the dog cannot always be the best in both roles. The law enforcement administrator must always strive to provide the most cost effective service possible, and that ultimately taxpayer pressure will bring in someone else if he is perceived as coming up short. For the canine unit administrator, and for the entire working police canine community, this in general means that the dual-purpose patrol and detection dog is usually the most cost effective solution on the street, and that efficiency in breeding, selection and training of such dogs is essential to insure ongoing taxpayer support.

The on the street the law enforcement canine handler functions in much different, more complex and difficult circumstances than the single purpose dog handler. Engagements occur at traffic stops, checkpoints and crime scenes, often in the dark – environments fraught with inherent risk and danger. Engagements may be in isolated areas or at night where backup may not be in place at the critical moment of confrontation; and those present are likely to be potential suspects, who may become violent and aggressive, resist arrest, flee or fight back. In this environment, a dual-purpose drug and patrol dog, a German Shepherd or Malinois, is an enormous enhancement to officer security and the ability to affect an arrest without incidental violence. Because of the need to have the drug-detecting dog immediately available, because of the need for officer security in the search and arrest and because of cost effectiveness considerations, the need for the same dog to serve all necessary functions, the vast majority of police canines today are selected and trained for dual-purpose service.

Over the years, many breeds, methodologies in training and deployment strategies have been devised and implemented on a provisional basis, and mostly fallen away. There have been a few instances of experiments with a single officer patrolling with two dogs, usually a Malinois or Shepherd as the primary dog and a second dog, often a smaller and less aggressive, who is a drug specialist. This is expensive in terms of support and possibly the expense of a bigger vehicle and in terms of the care and maintenance of the dogs, where the handler must feed and train both dogs and provide ongoing maintenance training. Furthermore, two dogs mean two dogs to integrate into personal and family life and possible discipline problems if the dogs tend toward mutual aggression. This means that every day there are two dogs that need personal time and attention for training and just to hang out with the boss. This approach, and many others, have been abandoned because of practical deployment and cost considerations.

When the explosive or bomb detection dog makes his find in a safe way there has by definition been a successful mission completion; a potential tragedy has been averted. Identifying, finding and prosecuting or otherwise neutralizing the people behind the bomb are secondary issues.

But drug detection is only the first step of a process that must lead to a conviction of those responsible in order to be truly successful. This means that the chain of events leading up to the find or arrest must stand up in court as a legally valid search and the procurement of evidence must meet all legal thresholds. This will often require a certification process to demonstrate that an indication by the dog is valid probable cause for a search. The dog with a history of false indications will likely be cited by the defense attorney as a transparent pretext for an illegal search.

For this reason, the training needs to create a minimal percentage of false positive indications as well as the reliable ability to find drugs in difficult circumstances. Complete, specific documentation of successful training against false positives becomes a fundamental requirement for successful prosecution.

The Bill of Rights, as implemented as the first ten amendments to our constitution, has had a profound effect on the evolution of our nation and the overall American experience. The Fourth Amendment reads:

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

As the use of drug detecting dogs has become more prevalent and effective, the responding defensive legal strategy has often been the claim of violation of constitutional protections against unreasonable search and seizure. As these cases have wound their way to the Supreme Court case law is gradually laying down the ground rules. A major Supreme Court decision in an Illinois case has held the routine sniffing drug check as part of a traffic stop to be legal if it does not detain a citizen unreasonably and racial or ethnic profiling is not a routine cause for a search. In practice this means that if the dog is there he can sniff around the car, but you cannot hold a person for an hour waiting for the canine unit to respond to a radio summons.

A further legal strategy has been to question the accuracy of the dog, to demand proof in court that the dog's indication was highly likely to be valid because of a proven historical high success rates. A drug dog is accurate because of good selection, training and deployment practice, and if false positive indications in training are condoned then it will translate to false indications in service. One might argue that a hit rate of forty percent is reasonable, that you will find many drugs that way, but the negative factor is that the sixty percent false positive indications are going to result in inconvenience and annoyed citizens, perhaps extremely annoyed citizens. Furthermore, at some level of false positive indications the courts are going to find that they do not constitute probable cause; and the resulting searches, and any evidence or illegal drugs recovered, might well be non-admissible in court.

As a personal experience, in the terminal in New York on the way back from the Netherlands, I was in a line of passengers and a handler with a Beagle made a pass, most likely looking for produce or other agricultural products banned because of potential disease propagation. The dog went quickly down the line, but sniffed carefully at my shoulder bag, but then went on without making a distinct indication. The handler gave me a look, but passed on. Clearly the training and discipline demanded a very specific indication in order to justify a further search, which was not present here. We had been in many kennels and at various training fields, my bag probably picked up some scent, perhaps I put it down and it was marked, providing an international canine greeting for the next dog. The handler later approached me and asked if he could look in my bag, he was clearly uncertain about what was going on with the dog. When the cops or the handlers make good decisions, and follow the appropriate protocols, there is nothing about it in the newspapers.

There are significant variations in the quality of trained dogs in use, and the need to weed out the less well trained through education, public pressure and increasingly comprehensive certification programs is necessary for ongoing taxpayer support. Routine canine drug or explosive screening has been expanding into our airports, court buildings and schools. Police search and surveillance practice always walks the

knife-edge of appropriate diligence and breaching the protection of the constitution against inappropriate search. In reality, this is an ever-moving demarcation point, for no one can doubt that the 9/11 atrocity provided security and police administrators new latitude, both in new laws with expansion of legal search procedures and circumstances and in increasingly permissive interpretation of existing law.

Police or contractor administrated drug scans in schools have been controversial. A uniformed officer with a holstered side arm and a German Shepherd going up and down a line of grade or high school students looking for drugs is not the educational atmosphere most of us want, and certainly not good public relations. Benefit in terms of drug recovery and deterrence would seem to be out of proportion to the fear and disruption of the educational process and the police state overtones. On the other hand, searches of lockers, desks or classrooms when students are absent are less objectionable and yet still capable of detecting drugs or serving as a deterrent if the students are made aware of the practice.

The police force, and particularly the individual officer, is inevitably under enormous pressure. When heinous crimes are in the newspapers and on the evening television news there is enormous pressure to produce a suspect, and district attorneys routinely launch political careers on the basis of high profile convictions. It is a melancholy yet inevitable fact that the system finds and convicts innocent people in response to these pressures, and the canine handler is under particular stress. A sniff based canine indication of the presence of drugs, according to extensive court rulings, provides a constitutionally valid probable cause for a search. But the indication is ultimately in the mind of the handler, who can see or produce such an indication at will regardless of the actual presence of drug odor; more than almost any other area of law enforcement the integrity of the system is directly dependent on the moral integrity and courage of the individual handler. Most often these ideals are lived up to, but constant vigilance on the part of police administration and the court system is necessary to insure justice rather than just convictions.

In summary, canine drug detection must be scrupulous in training, record keeping, certification and evenhanded application so as to build public confidence that searches of vehicles or premises are according to the spirit and letter of the law rather than using the dogs as a pretext or an excuse to profile, intimidate or violate constitutional rights.

Explosives and Bomb Detection

Festering international terrorist activity, culminating in the attack of September 11, 2001, created a radical transformation in internal and external security practice. A consequence has been ongoing military involvement in the Middle East, where the tactics of the adversary focus on hidden explosive devices and suicide bombing operations. This has brought the explosive detection potential of a good dog to the forefront as a means of detecting and thus being able to disable or safely discharge explosives before they cause damage and loss of life. Dogs have also been effective in detecting accelerants, that is, remnants of flammable substances at a fire scene, possibly indicating arson and thus the likely concealment of evidence.

Bomb and explosive detection in critical applications such as airport security and Middle East military operations have thus been a major focus of canine application in recent years, and well-trained dogs have been in great demand. For obvious reasons of security, police officers and trainers are in general extremely reluctant to discuss tactics and details of training, which of course must be respected.

Although carefully selected Shepherds and Malinois are high potential detection dogs, in applications with significant civilian exposure, such as airport security, a breed with a non-aggressive persona, such as a Labrador Retriever, has obvious

advantages. In such applications, a smaller dog can be much more agile and thus have easier access in restricted area searches such as the interior of an airplane. The consequences of a single failure to detect are so potentially devastating that the dog is usually a full time, single purpose dog. Also, in this environment, there is often so much work to do that explosive detection becomes a full time occupation.

In other applications such as the general police patrol, the dog who will reliably alert on explosives, guns or ammunition brings an extra dimension in terms of finding evidence as well as the detection of an actual explosive device.

Although there is much commonality with the training methods employed for drug dogs, the explosive detection dog must have an extremely reliable passive alert, that is, upon sensing the presence of explosives react calmly, go into a sit or other passive posture and not scratch at, push with the nose or otherwise disturb the suspected explosive device.

The law enforcement patrol or specialist dog is virtually never trained to detect both drugs and explosives. Training for several substances is not especially difficult, but dogs are fallible and subject to momentary confusion and mistakes just like any other creature, man included. Missing a single concealed drug package in the broad scheme of things is not of extreme consequence, but any missed explosive device has a high potential for a disaster, and any compromise in training is too high a price to pay for convenience in training or deployment. In some situations outside of the mainstream law enforcement applications, such as general drug sweeps in prison systems or schools, some dogs are trained to alert on firearms as well as drugs. The use of this training strategy is of course a judgment to be made by the individual institution, but not generally considered bad practice in these specific circumstances. (Frost, 2010)

Explosive detection is actually a diverse set of specialties, including bomb detection, explosive detection, land mines, firearms and ammunition, each requiring specific training methods and the corresponding deployment tactics. The land mine dog is typically a specialist, and the dog primarily intended for civilian vehicle checks would have differences in the details of training from a military dog being prepared for the extreme hazards of the war zone. The people involved are in general very reluctant to talk about details.

Explosive detection is also extremely important for national security, and thus a key element in the protection of government leaders and officials and government and military facilities worldwide. According to Chapman the United States Secret Service began using explosive detection dogs in 1976 to protect the President, other officials and foreign dignitaries and heads of state. By 1988 there were about thirty-five detection dogs serving as part of the Secret Service. (Chapman, Police Dogs, 1990)

Crowd Control

Throughout history those empowered to impose law and order generally answered only to an elite set of authorities, had a free hand to enforce discipline and insure order and tranquility, if not justice. These were times of entrenched class social structures, and the function of civil authorities was primarily to enforce and maintain class privilege. Large, aggressive dogs often had a role in this, were extraordinarily intimidating and effective at creating fear and breaking down morale and the willingness for overt resistance. This was a fundamental reason for the Molosser or Mastiff style of dog, and some of the earliest nineteenth century records of police dog programs indicate that crowd control or riot suppression was the primary reason for their creation.

In modern democracies with established legal systems increasingly open to all, and an active press to highlight abuse, the use of dogs to counter civil disturbance becomes more problematic. While those sympathetic to law and order as an overriding priority may applaud canine intimidation in a crowd control or riot, others will see the dogs as inappropriate force, manifestations of police abuse or even brutality.

In our era, establishing policy for canine deployment to maintain order in crowded areas or regain control in case of riot or civil disruption is a most difficult task for the administrator of a police canine unit. While a small number of handlers with dogs can provide significant leverage both in a physical and psychological sense, there are always among the mass of people individuals of vulnerability, such as children, or inadvertent, innocent bystanders. Avoiding civilian injuries, brutality or inappropriate intimidation needs to be a priority because it is the right thing to do, and because it is the general inclination of the press to focus attention on such things, which are inevitably used as a basis for criticism in the aftermath. In spite of the serious potential hazards, crowd control is in general a somewhat common police canine service. As an example, most British police officers are not armed, and the use of dogs in crowd situations there is not especially uncommon.

A complicating factor is that a primary objective of most demonstrations or riots – perhaps the overriding objective – is to provoke police retaliation that can be used to gain sympathy for the cause; and nothing is more evocative than direct canine engagement in the media, especially when victims can be portrayed as innocent, young or vulnerable.

The use of dogs and fire hoses in the civil rights conflicts of the 1960's American south is a primary example, for these images are seared in our common memory half a century later. In the aftermath of these events there was enormous backlash against police canine deployment; as a direct consequence, some canine units were disbanded entirely and many others either banned use of the dogs for crowd control or set in place rigid deployment policies and restrictions. This was a real setback in police canine programs, which would not entirely recover until the priority of suppressing illegal drug distribution emerged after the Vietnam War.

Historically strategy for canine use in crowd situations was often to feature the dogs, bring them out early and up front, for maximum psychological impact to nip an insurrection in the bud, quickly break the spirit of the crowd and to provide ongoing long-term intimidation. One of the positive outcomes of this unfortunate era in America is that overt police intimidation of any segment of our population is much less politically, legally or morally viable. Today there is need for much more caution, and when the dogs are in use the usual practice is to minimize exposure, especially where it is likely to draw the attention of the press and the cameraman. American police agencies seem to have this well under control; I cannot recall an instance of well-publicized canine presence in a crowd situation in recent years. The dogs may on occasion be in the background, but they are not often making the evening television news, which is a very good thing any way you look at it.

Administration and Leadership

Effective administration and sound acquisition and deployment strategy are just as critical to the police canine operation as strong dogs, committed handlers and good training. Most units prosper because they are effective and beneficial, make an ongoing contribution to fulfillment of departmental objectives. But canine units are not essential, are vulnerable to reduction or elimination in difficult economic circumstance or when new civilian or police leadership is not fully committed. In order to prosper in the long term the unit must be continually justified by proven effectiveness and public acceptance. This means that it must be cost effective,

project authority on the street and yet not be perceived as an agent of inappropriate police intimidation. In many ways these requirements pull in different directions, necessitating compromise and balance in strategic planning and tactical operational imperatives. Maintaining integrity, effectiveness and respect is a difficult ongoing task which can only be accomplished through excellence in leadership, administration and planning.

While bringing a new dimension to police presence, the canine unit also adds a new layer of complexity to police administration. The dogs must be selected, trained and deployed so as to be effective, but reliably under control, unlikely to engage an innocent person, including ancillary police personnel, under conditions of enormous stress to the people and the dogs alike. If a ten-year-old child turns up in a building search and the dog bites indiscriminately the press will most certainly go into spasms of righteous indignation, never mind that there was no reason for the kid to be there or that they have no viable alternatives to suggest.

Not only must the canine handler have and maintain the attributes of a good police officer – that is know the law, be proficient with his side arm, maintain physical conditioning – he must also maintain readiness in his canine partner. The training and deployment regimen must provide a dog that is effective, physically fit, aggressive and reliably under control. But beyond these burdens, substantial as they are, the handler must always be situationally aware of his dog and environment, for the dog implicitly has the license to perceive imminent danger and respond with aggression. The handler must foresee and avoid circumstances where the dog will understandably but inappropriately perceive a threat and react, an enormous ongoing responsibility. This commitment must come from the top down as well as the ground up, be the expectation of the leadership, the real standard of behavior, and the result of commitment and training at every level.

Police administration must take care to pair the right handler with a capable, compatible dog and then provide professional instruction and training, both prior to deployment and ongoing, to make this work. This means either carrying the cost of competent police dog instructors on the staff or paying outside agencies to provide instruction and education. Either option is expensive. Furthermore, the canine teams – especially the drug detection dogs – require ongoing testing and evaluation, maintaining accreditation, in order to insure successful prosecution subsequent to the drug find.

Dogs live in their own world and respond to stressful confrontations according their nature and to training and handler interaction and control. The handler must not only determine appropriate force but also be able to sense his dog's state of mind and deploy him accordingly. This requires a strong bond and deep understanding between handler and dog, which only evolve through training and a long term working relationship.

It is essential for those in command to understand this bond and make training, deployment and assignment decisions accordingly. It is natural to regard squad cars as interchangeable assets and assign them according to convenience; but when this mind set carries over to the dogs serious consequences can ensue. Although not now common practice, there have historically been circumstances where dogs were assigned to multiple handlers. Such a policy makes it difficult to insure proper rest, training time and recreation for the dog. But the primary difficulty is that a strong dog and handler relationship is difficult to achieve under such circumstances.

While the dog is the responsibility of his handler, it is essential that other officers be able to manage the dog in case of handler injury or separation during deployment. The dog and handler are often dispatched to provide assistance to fellow officers, and they need to be part of the solution rather than a new problem. Training and planning for such contingencies should be part of the routine training

regimen, and shooting the dog to regain control, while sometimes a tragic necessity, is not a good plan.

In America the police dog is usually the property of the department and represents a substantial investment in terms of acquisition cost and training. Sound management requires that as much as possible the dog and handler team form a long working partnership. In the ideal, a dog will enter service with a well-trained, handler and serve out his career as part of that team. If free of injury the dog entering service at two to three years of age can typically serve for seven to eight years, a little more in exceptional situations.

Today, the vast majority of police dogs live with the handler when off duty. Some become well integrated with the family and spend time in the residence; others are routinely segregated in a run or other enclosure, perfectly practical as long as adequate exercise is provided and there is sufficient protection from the elements according to local climate. This is highly variable, and family integration requires that all members be accepting and able to deal with the dog as necessary; taking daddy's police dog out to play is no more appropriate than wandering around the neighborhood with his service revolver. There is a lot of variation in police dogs, some perfectly good dogs need more rigid discipline and thus need to either be contained or directly under the control of the handler at all times.

In many departments there is a policy of rotating officers among diverse duties in order to enhance training and preparedness and to have personnel always available trained to respond to a specific situation. The ambitious individual officer wanting to advance must gain diversity in experience in order to move up in the ranks; and the canine program as a whole benefits from the presence of higher leadership and administrative personnel with real hands on canine experience. Many other situations, such as a handler injury, disability, retirement or personal preference will from time to time necessitate the end of the relationship. If the dog is near the end of his career an early retirement is often a good outcome, but otherwise the dog needs to make the transition to a new handler.

The transition is either going to take significant acclimation and retraining time or result in a less than service ready team on the street. Side arms and shotguns are standard issue items, but each police dog is unique in many ways and effective application is dependent on a firm bond and relationship between the officer and his dog, which takes time and dedication to build and maintain. Rotating dogs too often can also have serious consequences in off duty family situations; the dog well adapted to one home and family may not integrate well into another and may not adapt immediately to a kennel environment.

The nature of the dog always needs to be a consideration in team assignment: some dogs though when properly managed are very effective become dangerous in the hands of a not sufficiently dominant partner. When dogs are routinely assigned by administrators without personal hands on canine experience a difficult dog can fall into the hands of an inexperienced handler. This can sometimes be made to work when the transition occurs under the close direction of a good instructor, but expecting an immediate transition without sound training can create a real danger to the officer, his family and the public at large. Time allocated to training, and thus out of service, must be adequate to maintain readiness yet used efficiently and diligently enough to maintain long term cost effectiveness in the overall program.

In one instance a five-year-old Malinois with an outstanding service record was reassigned to a third handler, a police officer lacking canine experience. The dog was strong and aggressive and needed careful handling. In spite of being warned, when the officer was out of the home his wife let the dog out of his crate, and their small child was seriously injured by the dog. The knee jerk reaction, especially in the press, was that the dog should be put down because he mauled a kid, but a closer

look is called for in such situations, for this may or may not be an indication of an inappropriate dog, but it is a clear indication of a failure of policy and administration.

When you really think about it, this is so stupid on so many levels it is hard to know where to begin. In the first place, it is a serious breakdown in training and administration to drop an experienced, aggressive dog on a rookie handler, apparently with inadequate training and preparation. Next, from the dog's point of view he had been abruptly abandoned by his partner of several years and placed among strangers, who did not handle the transition appropriately. Obviously, nobody could have explained all of this to the dog and in spite of being of a very strong character he was just a dog, having your long term handler drop you off and not come back has to be enormously confusing and stressful. Any aggression against an innocent person is undesirable, but it is especially egregious when it is the consequence of stupidity in training and deployment, the failure to understand and empathize with the nature of the dog.

One police officer of my acquaintance commented that his Malinois is a police working dog, not a family dog. He said he would no more let his police dog loose with his family than he would let his child take his Glock out to play with the kids in the neighborhood. In a sense, this should be the default policy, with family integration to be carefully introduced in appropriate circumstances. This is of course a case-by-case personal decision, but the police administration and leadership need to supply guidance, especially to inexperienced handlers, in dealing with these issues.

Sometimes a causative factor for inappropriate training, living and deployment circumstances and decisions comes from believing misguided public relations propaganda. Some advocates tend to be reassuring and claim that a police dog is just like any other dog, except that rather than living full time in the home they happen to go along to help mommy or daddy at work. Well, a good police patrol dog is not just like any other dog; he is specifically bred and trained for aggression. Sure, some police dogs integrate with a particular family nicely, but this needs to be decided on a case-by-case basis, taking a good look at the dog, the maturity and competence of the handler and the general home situation. The spouse of the handler uncomfortable with the dog is always a serious problem. There is nothing wrong with a police dog living primarily in a kennel run as the norm; this can keep a lid on all sorts of potentially bad situations.

The police department is akin to the military unit in that it is founded on esprit de corps, top down commitment to the enforcement of law and order with ongoing respect for civilian dignity and rights. An essential element in military integrity, discipline and readiness is the separate system of military justice which closely binds the chain of command as embodied in the officer corps with legal authority. This is much less true of police operations, which interact primarily with citizens rather than adversaries on the battlefield. This makes police operations vulnerable to much of the labor strife encountered in the private sector. For these reasons entrenched bureaucracy and police associations or unions can cripple a canine program.

As an example, Ken Burger, the now retired long time director of the Chicago Police canine program, some years ago mentioned in an extensive *Dog Sports* magazine interview that because of union rules the assignment to the canine unit was according to seniority rather than aptitude and a desire to contribute in an extraordinary way. This meant that some handlers were just men with seniority looking for a soft job, who would more or less do what was required by the book and then go home, which is not a situation conducive to excellence. (Burger, 1991) Chicago is of course world famous for corruption, featherbedding and padded work rules – ask any down town convention exhibitor who has had to pay an electrician several hundred dollars to plug in a spot light – but while most police operations are

effective and professional all governmental agencies, especially those involving union representation, are vulnerable to this sort of thing. Excellence in a canine program directly depends on the selection of aggressive, athletic handlers willing to go the extra mile, where the assignment is a privilege rather than a right.

Acquisition and Training

The rapid initial expansion of European canine police service and the police breeds such as the German Shepherd, beginning about 1900, was mutually supportive and reinforcing; police and sport trainers, breeders and the emerging national canine organizations were a community with common goals in spite of differences in language and culture. The time had come, it was as simple as that. The involvement of senior police and military leadership, such as Most in Germany and KNPV officials in the Netherlands, was enormously beneficial to the vigor and growth of the entire culture.

In America, things were much different. A primary reason was the time lapse; serious American police canine activity did not commence until the 1960s or become mainstream until the 1970s. The canine establishment, based on the British pattern, was hostile and obstructionist, strongly discouraging serious dogs or any activity involving canine aggression. Where the European founders were able to deal with supportive or at least neutral national organizations, the AKC was historically always hostile.

For these reasons America police service evolved in isolation from civilian amateur activity emerging in the same time frame or a little later, relying almost entirely on Europe for dogs, training methodology and guidance. The consequence was very little communication, cooperation, mutual support or sharing of resources with the emerging amateur working dog community, which was weak and late to evolve. Each set of people forged their own European bonds, but were virtually independent, so much so that they were not even well enough acquainted for distrust. Another factor has been the general tendency in American police circles to turn inward and distrust civilian authority or cooperative relationships beyond the necessary interaction with the politicians and office holders, who supply the money and appoint the senior commanders.

American sport trainers from the beginning were isolated and dependent on Europeans for breeding stock and training philosophy. Importing titled dogs for instant credibility and a shortcut to the podium became fashionable, but did little to enhance the domestic working dog culture or the credibility of the movement. Much of this European subservience was about the seeking of acceptance and approval, condescending pats on the head from Europeans in positions of perceived prestige and authority. There was generally little interest in the actual utility of the dogs beyond accumulating certificates and cups to wave on the podium, and making money selling dogs and services to newcomers seeking their own cups.

In the early years there was the hope and expectation that American unity would in time evolve through emulation of European synergy, adopt the better aspects of the culture and tradition. Instead Europe has drifted in the wrong direction, toward estrangement between police breeding, training and service on the one hand and the incessantly watered down IPO sport program of the FCI on the other.

This has been especially fraught in Germany, particularly in the German Shepherd community. Schutzhund originated as the definitive German Shepherd character gage, the prerequisite for breeding. IPO had existed for many years as a similar international program with different rules and philosophy. In 2012 Schutzhund went out of existence, and the IPO sport program became the German Shepherd performance and character evaluation process. This was not destined to

end well, for the FCI continued to water down the IPO program, dropping the stick hits from the FCI IPO championships in 2014.

European emphasis on conformation lines, primarily in the German Shepherd, with increasingly feeble character expectations exacerbates this general deterioration of the heritage. Thus when the police resurgence and awakening sport interest commenced in America, broadly speaking in the 1970s, the unity in Europe, most especially Germany, was dissipating, with the emerging predominance of show line breeding and sport training standards diverging increasingly from the realities of police service.

For all of these reasons American police dogs have primarily been European imports, or dogs a generation or so removed. This has occurred either through brokers or by sending in house personnel to evaluate, select and purchase dogs, both untrained prospects and trained or titled dogs. Military acquisition has followed similar patterns, although they have had their own breeding program at Lackland for a number of years. American civilian trainers, mostly Schutzhund enthusiasts, have also remained dependent on imported dogs for competition, often trained and titled dogs.

Many American police departments, especially the smaller or relatively newer units, acquire dogs and training through commercial vendors. The quality of the dogs and training varies, for anyone can line up a source of European dogs, easy to do if you have the cash, and be in the business of supplying police dogs and training. The problem is that dogs are not a commodity. Within reason you can purchase a specific model Glock automatic according to price and service, but every dog is different and it is enormously more difficult to select and negotiate price. Administrators of smaller or newer canine units are quite often lacking in experience, which is why they are going to the commercial supplier for the package solution in the first place. If the agency does not quickly evolve and become more sophisticated, the supplier has no reason, other than personal integrity, to advance the quality of the dogs or training because that would mean that he would need to supply better and thus more expensive dogs. For this among many other reasons there is enormous variation in the quality of police dogs on America's streets today. The solutions for this need to come from within the police agencies, and cooperative training, competitive events, outside evaluations and formal certification requirements would all help in raising expectations and standards.

Having spent a little time observing training in a vendor facility, it becomes evident that success takes more than just the right vendor, has several components:

- A quality dog with appropriate early socialization and training.
- Knowledgeable, experienced instructors able to project enthusiasm.
- Engaged police administration committed to training and excellence.
- Candidate handlers that are sound patrol officers with a strong work ethic and enthusiasm for working with the dogs, willing to go the extra mile, and the ability to bond with the dog.

As in every sphere of business, there will always will be manipulative, deficient and even fraudulent police dog vendors, it is in the nature of human beings and free enterprise. The only driving force for better vendors is better informed and more sophisticated customers. In this environment good police administration means as much as possible bringing the knowledge and experience in house, to come to the point where the department handlers and trainers, and former handlers still within the department, perhaps at administrative levels, are able to evaluate dogs, training and performance. This often does not scale well to the smaller programs, which must either function in cooperation with neighboring agencies in terms of training and leadership or rely too much on the commercial vendors. Strong administrative

experience, knowledge and engagement tends to result in a stronger vendor relationship, because of the certain knowledge that poor dogs or service will not go unnoticed and could result in losing the business. Good vendors are created by strong, knowledgeable, demanding customers. Bad vendor relationships are those in which the vendor is able to manipulate and in effect manage the canine unit to his own benefit and profit.

One experienced police trainer has commented that among the reasons for the lack of interaction and cooperation between the police canine community and the sport training in America is that vendors and brokers have tended to encourage dependence and disparaged the amateur or sport training. While this is only one aspect of a very complex reality, which has been discussed extensively in earlier chapters, it does ring true in my ears.

Police dog candidates are increasingly being bred specifically for sale to American police agencies, both here and in Europe. This is not just a matter of good breeding stock, proper care of the bitch in whelp, attending the whelping of the litter and providing clean runs, good food and medical care. As discussed in the *Nature and Nurture* section at the end of Chapter 2, the young dogs need intensive socialization, especially in the two or three weeks after the eyes open. This may seem to be a matter of just having people play with the puppies, but it is more difficult than that. The pup ideally needs to get into some sort of a family situation. Just as the assistance dogs for the blind are fostered out for a year or so to provide this critical socialization, our military breeding program at Lackland Air Force Base and commercial breeding operations seek out people to foster candidate pups.

Fostering a pup for assistance training or the military is generally a matter of a contribution to the common good, a service to society as a whole. Fostering a pup for a commercial operation brings forth a complex set of issues, in that the process greatly adds to the value of the pup, presenting the question of who should share in the eventual purchase price. The free enterprise answer is that the market should dictate price, that if puppy fostering becomes a paid service rather than a civic contribution the person needs monetary compensation. One problem with this is that money will attract people seeking money, and some will seek to acquire many pups, perhaps from different agencies, and simply feed and kennel them for the allotted time and then turn them in for payment, which of course means that the whole exercise has been more or less pointless. These are complex and unresolved issues.

Canine units are expensive and under continual pressure to justify their existence in terms of cost effectiveness. Obvious components of cost include procurement of the dog, provision of food, shelter and medical care and the necessity of special equipment, such as larger and extensively modified vehicles. But the major ongoing expense is training in that the handler generally is on duty during routine training, either on an overtime basis or on the clock detracting from patrol availability.

Eight to sixteen hours a month of maintenance training per dog, a modest schedule, quickly adds up, is a budget item of many thousands of dollars for even small programs. If the training is local, the dog is generally available for dispatch in case of an incident, offsetting some of the expense, as breaking off a training session at any point is generally not harmful; indeed, preparing for the unexpected is one of the fundamental aspects of the training.

Beyond the time of the individual handler, there must be people to direct the training, observe and correct procedures, serve as protection helper, evaluate the dogs and generally run the program. Smaller units often use outside professional services because it is impractical to find or pay an in house trainer. Larger departments often maintain in house training and supervisory staff in addition to the actual on the street canine handlers. Regardless of the organizational details, these tend to be experienced, capable people, and thus relatively expensive in terms of



British police officers patrolling the docks and rail yard.
1941

salary, the provision of office space, vehicles, equipment such as bite suits and sleeves and other ongoing expenses.

In order to justify their expense, police dogs increasingly need to serve more than a single purpose. In particular, the olfactory potential is of fundamental importance, for the modern police patrol dog must be capable of searching a building, doing an outdoor area search, scanning the ground and grass for evidence and tracking and searching for a criminal or lost person.

When a track is long or difficult, or the weather is hot, tracking can require great stamina and endurance, as it is very demanding and difficult work. With the exception of a few specialist situations, such as an occasional Bloodhound, the police dog in America today is a German Shepherd or, increasingly, a Malinois.¹ This is because the medium size and great stamina of the herding dog is an excellent match for the police patrol role and because viable candidates in other breeds do not exist in sufficient numbers.

The growth of police canine programs, and increasing military requirements, has created a brisk and expanding demand for capable dogs. Many years ago in Chicago public radio announcements that the police department was seeking donations of candidate canine patrol dogs were fairly common, and such dogs were in fact utilized. But the reality is that effective police canine patrol programs require more than pet breeding cast offs, demand that the dogs come from serious breeding programs where the stock is realistically tested to establish that they indeed do have the physical and moral attributes necessary. In general the vast majority of unwanted dogs in civilian hands are unlikely to stand up under training, and taking on a dog that at some point has to be discarded is an expensive and wasteful process.

Today most American police dogs are imported, primarily from countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium and the Czech Republic, or are first generation offspring of such dogs, often bred specifically for police service by commercial operations. Breeding has been ramped up to produce dogs specifically for the American market, attracted by prices upwards of five thousand dollars for an untrained year and a half old dog. American quasi-amateur dog sport programs, primarily Schutzhund, have played relatively little part in this, which is generally not a good thing.

When I was spending significant time in the Netherlands it was quite common to find police officers as active trainers in KNPV clubs, and when introduced to higher-level KNPV officers they were quite often police administrators in their day jobs. This perception may be slightly skewed by the fact that the friend whom I usually stay with is a KNPV judge; perhaps I have just been less fortunate in my American connections. But on the whole my opinion is that the fact that European police

¹ Dutch Shepherds being essentially a coat variation of the Malinois.

officers, club trainers and trial participants have close relationships – indeed are often the same people – is a fundamental causative factor for the widespread success of Dutch police canine programs.¹

Part of an ongoing canine operation is or should be periodic performance review of team effectiveness. In the middle 1980s, I was fortunate enough to spend a day at a police training and evaluation session at Apeldoorn in the Netherlands. The practice there was that each six months an outside evaluator was brought in to conduct what amounted to a mini KNPV trial, which as I recall took about half a day for the six or seven Malinois and five or six Bouviers then on the force.

My impression was that if a dog looked good, and had looked good previously, the test was perfunctory, short and quick. Presumably in a questionable situation the evaluator was free to test to whatever level he felt necessary to verify the dog. An interesting point is that if the dog failed to qualify again after being on probation the dog would or could be eliminated. But if the dog went the handler most likely lost his canine handler status and privileges. There are no doubt provisions where it seems to be a fundamental problem with the dog rather than the training, but to continue as a handler you were responsible to maintain the readiness and discipline of your dog, which would seem to be simple common sense.

Trends

Over the past twenty years there has been enormous demand for police and military canines, domestically driven primarily by the war on drugs and the enormous demand for bomb and explosive detection dogs in the various Middle Eastern conflicts.

Reliable statistical information on the number of police dogs in American service is surprisingly difficult to come by. According to Chapman there were approximately 7000 police canine teams in America in 1989. There does seem to be steady growth, as there are reliable reports of over 9,000 in police dogs serving in America in 2002. (Mesloh, 2003) The post 9/11 emphasis on security would make a somewhat larger figure seem likely. Although long-term demand seems likely to remain high, in the short term the winding down of our Middle East commitments is likely to reduce demand.

The wild card in all of this is the evolving American attitude toward recreational drugs, which is generally softening. Possession of small amounts of drugs such as marijuana is increasingly treated as a minor infraction, often ignored at officer discretion, and increasingly condoned on a state by state basis. Although federal law and enforcement aggressiveness remain relatively stringent, state laws are increasingly relaxed in terms of medical use, which is often a wink-wink acceptance of recreational use, and outright legalization.

Widespread acceptance of recreational drug use would seem likely to diminish the demand for police canine service. Legalization of soft drugs, particularly marijuana, would present retraining and management problems in that positive find indications on newly legal substances would likely be interpreted as civil rights or constitutional violations.

¹ This is especially effective in the Netherlands, neither the Belgian or French sport programs seem to have police relations that are comparably strong and cooperative.

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[Police Dog Book](#)

[Angel's Lair All Breed](#) **[Angel's Lair Schutzhund](#)**