

Extract from:

The Police Dog: History, Breeds and Service
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Chapter 8

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The Netherlands



*Bouvier des Flandres Duko v Mereveld,
born 1969. KNPV helper Rein Beumkes*

During the seventeenth century the Netherlands emerged as a major seafaring and economic power, establishing a colonial empire in southern Africa, the Far East and the Americas. Although there has been the inevitable ebb and flow of fortune, on the whole the Dutch have avoided much of Europe's religious strife and are well characterized as pragmatic, tolerant, secular and prosperous, attributes which have served them well. Subsequent to their seventeenth century fling at empire building, the Dutch, being a relatively small Nation compared to neighboring Germany, Spain and France, have with some success tended to a policy peace and neutrality.

European religious strife drove many peoples to seek shelter in the Netherlands, including Jews and Huguenots, French Protestants fleeing Catholic oppression. The accepting Dutch social structure provided a haven where on the whole they prospered, integrated

and contributed. Holland today can be characterized as sophisticated, prosperous, cosmopolitan and tolerant, as exemplified in their attitude toward soft drugs and well controlled commercialized sex.¹ As an American, I must admit that I am inclined to believe that we would be a little bit better off if we were a little bit more like the Dutch.

Even today when you drive the back roads of the broad central Brabant plain common to the south of the Netherlands and Flemish Belgium it can be difficult to know which nation you are in, and the history of these people and their working dogs is in a similar way intertwined. The Belgian herders, especially the Malinois, originated in the Flemish region adjacent to Holland; the Bouvier a little further west, toward the region adjacent to the North Sea. The people, language, culture and way of farming and life was much the same across this lush plain; it is an accident of history that these people, of such a common culture, are not united in a single

¹ Technically the nation is the Netherlands, of which North and South Holland are two principal provinces; but along with much of the world I cannot seem to break the habit of using the two expressions more or less interchangeably.

nation. The rough coated version of the Belgian Shepherd, the Laeken, was always more popular in Holland than in his nominal homeland.

After the First World war, the Bouvier des Flandres also gained popularity in the Netherlands, and for a five or ten year period commencing in the middle 1980's the Bouvier was by far the most popular dog in Holland, peaking out at over 10,000 annual puppy registrations or fifteen percent of the Dutch total. In the big picture this grass fire of popularity turned out to be an enormously mixed blessing for the Bouvier as a working dog, for the decline on KNPV trial fields took place in the same time period, perhaps providing an object lesson for others to contemplate.

The administration of general canine affairs in the Netherlands is in the hands of the *Raad van Beheer*, which translates very roughly as board or council of management or directors. The *Raad van Beheer* is FCI affiliated and is directly comparable in scope and function to the AKC in the United States or the *Kennel Club* in Great Britain. This organization maintains canine registrations through its stud book, the *Nederlands Hondenstamboek*, abbreviated NHSB. Police dog affairs are administrated through the Royal Dutch Police organization, KNPV. Since the KNPV does not require registration for participation, a dog being what he does on the trial field rather than what is scribbled in registry books, there is ongoing, underlying tension between the two organizations.

Dutch 2011 Registrations	
Labrador Retriever	3529
German Shepherd	2131
Golden Retriever	1806
Berner Sennenhond	1518
Chihuahua	1365
Staffordshire Bull Terrier	1325
Franse Bulldog	988
Border Collie	898
Boxer	877
Dachshund	805
Selective entries below here	
Belgische Herder, Mechelse	463
Rottweiler	454
Bouvier des Flandres	420
Belgische Herder, Tervuerense	271
Belgische Herder, Groenendaeler	181
Airedale Terrier	156
Hovawart	155
Shiba	154
Dobermann	152
Briard	144
Hollandse Herder, korthaar	144
Belgische Herder, Laekense	98
Beauceron	85
Hollandse Herder, langhaar	85
Riesenschnauzer	71

The Netherlands remained neutral in WW I, thus avoiding much of the tragic devastation of their Belgian neighbors to the south. The German blockade and the suspension of international economic intercourse led to widespread hardship for the population, particularly since much of the food supply was normally imported. The Dutch were overrun by the brutal Nazi juggernaut in WW II and suffered grievously.

As in other nations, the indigenous police style working breeds are not especially popular in the population as a whole. This is indicated in the brief table to the left, where the first set of entries, through the Dachshund, are rank ordered in popularity, while the following entries are selected to highlight the working breeds of interest. (Much more complete tabular data is included in the appendices.)

It must be understood that the vast majority of the Belgian and Dutch (Hollandse) herders are unregistered KNPV breeding lines. Dogs competing in IPO must be registered with an FCI organization, so most of the working breeds primarily oriented to IPO, such as the German Shepherd or Rottweiler, would be included in these registration numbers.

The Dutch Shepherd

Just as there was national pride in the Shepherds of Germany and Belgium, the Dutch have had a natural desire to create their own Shepherd breed. In the early days there was a lot of variation in appearance of the dogs on the farms, and if one could have gathered together samples from Germany, Belgium, Holland and perhaps regions of France it would have been difficult for an observer to label them according to country of origin; distinct, uniform appearance, for better or worse, was to come with the establishment of the conformation show as the driving force of breed creation and differentiation. But the Dutch and the Flemish, which largely created the Belgian Shepherd, especially the Malinois, have always been especially close in geography, language and culture.



Dutch Shepherd Spenlow KNPV PH 1 410 pt
Owner Wilma Vogelaar, photo Michiel Schaak

Whether the Dutch Shepherd is in reality a separate breed or just a label for Malinois which are a little larger, a little less over the edge and tend toward the brindle in coat is an open question; ultimately it is what the dog is capable of on the field that matters to the serious people.

As in Belgium, the Dutch conformation community spent an inordinate amount of time squabbling about coat color and texture, which resulted in elimination of much of the original indigenous Dutch Shepherd breeding population, and of course,

much of the working character. In the years prior to WW I there was mixing in of German Shepherd and Belgian Shepherd stock. WW I created huge animosity toward all things German, and German Shepherd interbreeding, to whatever extent it actually occurred, was deemphasized, with the breeds going separate ways ever since.

After to the Second World War the Dutch Shepherd had been greatly reduced in numbers and was gradually reestablished utilizing substantial of Belgian Shepherd breeding stock. Today, the Dutch Shepherd is sharply divided into a relatively small show dog segment and a much larger and more prosperous and vital working or KNPV population, with a lot of unregistered dogs and ongoing mixing with the Malinois.

NHSB registrations for the year 2011 were as follows:

Hollandse Herder, Korthaar (Short Coat)	144
Hollandse Herder, Langhaar (Long Coat)	85
Hollandse Herder, Ruwhaar (Rough coat)	18

Indeed, the KNPV dogs can be thought of as an open breeding pool of Malinois and Dutch Shepherd, with the individual dog assigned a breed according to appearance rather than immediate ancestors. Thus it is an open question as to

whether the Dutch Shepherd should best be thought of as a breed or as simply a color and coat variety within the overall breeding population.

Within the KNPV community, where mixed or cross bred competitors are not unusual or remarkable, unregistered dogs accepted as Dutch shepherds are trained and titled, as is the case with the Malinois. As usual, unregistered in this context does not mean bad, irresponsible or of unknown breeding, for the working people understand genetic principles perfectly well and know the backgrounds of the animals they are breeding as far back as they consider it relevant.

It is important to understand that while lack of a pedigree and formal registration papers is not a problem for the KNPV trainer, those who wish to compete in international sports such as IPO or on an international level must have a dog with registration with an FCI affiliated national registry, in this instance the *Raad van Beheer*. Since most of the best working stock is from the KNPV lines, there is a substantial amount of falsification of papers. In general, unless you really know the people well and they are well connected and of long standing, having the official pedigree of a good working dog before your eyes is likely a matter of reading fiction. Thirty or forty years ago I would have been disturbed by this, but for me today this is just the way of the world, it is about dogs, not about papers. A good dog with false papers or no papers is enormously preferable to a mediocre dog with an "impeccable" and accurate pedigree.

The Dutch Police Dog Trials

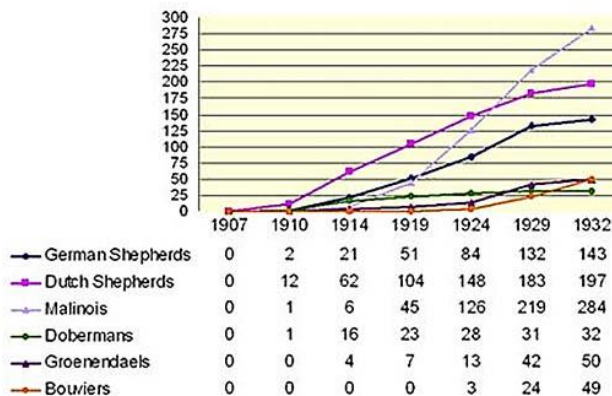


Throughout much of the world today the dogs most in demand for actual police service are those with a Dutch Police or KNPV certificate. There are a number of reasons for this, but ultimately they go back to the steadfast Dutch character, for the Dutch are above all else practical, tolerant and pragmatic; if a dog is to have a police dog certificate it should be under the influence of the police handlers and leadership in the spirit of real world police dog service rather than trial systems under conformation establishment control with more emphasis on political correctness and accommodating the less intensive demeanor compatible with companion homes. Prancing obedience, ultra precise sits and ever less demanding protection are left to the increasingly hobbyist oriented sports; Dutch police trials are about things that matter for real world police dogs, about control and restraint as well as power and aggression. Largely unknown to the rest of the world until the 1980s, this steadfast Dutch heritage has become influential and respected throughout much of the world, with the dogs themselves in enormous demand.

The Dutch were a little bit late to the party, for although there had been previous training, formal trials did not commence until 1907 under the auspices of the *Nederlandse Politiehond Vereniging* or NPV. In 1912 royal sanction was obtained to bring forth the *Koninklijke Nederlandse Politiehond Vereniging* or in English the *Royal Dutch Police Dog Association*. The KNPV designation, or the even more elite "KNPV met lof" (with honors) appearing on a pedigree or certificate are among the most coveted in the world today.

In the early years the numbers were small, with for instance 12 certificates in the year 1921 and 60 in 1925. In that era the German breeds such as the Boxer and the German Shepherd were much more predominant, much better represented than today. Prior to 1924 the Dutch Shepherd was the most numerous breed, but political machinations in the show dog community, causing many successful Dutch Shepherd breeding lines to be excluded from registration because of coat color, texture and pattern resulted in a decline in this breed.

**History of Breeds Titled in KNPV
between 1907 and 1932**



Note that these are aggregate numbers, which means that the figures for 1932 on the right are totals, adding up to 822 total KNPV titles for the first 25 years.

In addition were 5 Airedales, 8 Briards, 15 Beauceron, 9 Rottweilers, 1 Giant Schnauzer, the remainder cross bred dogs.

From KNPV Web Site

Perhaps as a consequence of these early struggles, the KNPV community tends to hold formal registration and the foibles of the show community in disdain, for such people a dog is what he can do on the field rather than what is scribbled in registration books.

Today the vast majority of KNPV competitors are Malinois, mostly without registration papers, and a few Dutch Shepherds. But this was not always the case, prior to WW II the German Shepherd and a few Dobermans were represented. The Bouvier was reasonably popular after the war through the 1970s and even into the early eighties, but by that time was in serious decline.

This KNPV trial demands a dog of great character, physical strength, agility and stamina. These trials

emphasize protection work, involving distant attacks on an adversary who strikes the dog with a stick before he actually bites and realistic gun tests. The dog is required to take a man down off a bicycle, the desired procedure being for the dog to take a leg or to leap high and grab the man's upper arm, so as to avoid entanglement in the wheels. There is a search for dropped objects (typically 2 or 3 coins or bolts). Overall, the KNPV trial demands resilient, tough dogs.

The best-known program is the *Politiehond One*, or PH-1; which is generally what is meant by a reference to a KNPV certificate. There is also a more advanced PH-2 certificate, but this is relatively speaking less popular.

For the Police Dog I examination today, there are a possible 440 points. 352 points are required for the certificate. The dog with 402 or more points is awarded the coveted Certificate met Lof (with honors).²

At one time there was a "PH-I Certificate A" obtained for only 305 points, which was a provisional title valid for one year. Although this is no longer offered, it should be kept in mind for historical purposes.

The basic KNPV certificates include:

- Police Dog I Politiehond I
- Police Dog II Politiehond II
- Object Guard Dog Objectbewakingshond
- Tracking Dog Speurhond
- Basic Certificate Search Dogs Basiscertificaat Zoekhonden

Although numbers have fallen recently, in the mid 1990's the KNPV had about 10,000 members. The Netherlands is divided in eleven provinces, and the KNPV is also divided into these same provinces. Each province has its own governing structure, and the boards of all the provinces represent all the members of the KNPV in the meetings of the national governing body.

As of April 1994 there were 509 KNPV clubs in the Netherlands, 140 certified decoys and 64 certified judges. By 2011 the list of judges had grown to 74. In 2013 there were 82 judges and 65 helpers listed on the KNPV web site.

Yearly KNPV statistics are as follows:

	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	1993
Police Dog I	545	507	473	607	581	580	695
Police Dog II	43	47	55	54	40	82	62
Object Guard Dog	26	51	90	73	66	97	117
Members	5864	6052	6146	6189	6293	6348	10,000

Judging by the more rapid fall of in PH 2 and Object Guard numbers, it would seem plausible that the motivation for the PH I is increasingly commercial rather than simply personal sport and recreation. KNPV is most popular, and the competition the most intense, in the southern provinces of the Netherlands, such as Limburg and Brabant. 2010 membership figures were 1,718 in North Brabant, 868 in Limburg, 859 in Gelderland and 524 in South Holland.

² Historically there have been minor variations in these point schedules.

The KNPV trial is an arduous, comprehensive daylong sequence of exercises, typically beginning with water retrieval and obedience in the morning and a sequence of protection exercises in the afternoon. The protection exercises are generally held on a large field to accommodate the extremely long distances and relatively large audiences. Three judges are used, so the obedience and search exercises go on concurrently, each judge handling the separate exercises such as the coin search, guard of object, bicycle exercises and so forth. In the protection phase all



dogs perform sequentially on the same field, that is, all dogs do the first exercise, then the second and so forth until the trial is complete. All three judges are on the field for this work, as there is a lot going on and the large distances would make it impossible for a single judge to adequately direct and observe the performance.

The Police Dog I examination has a water exercise where the dog must swim across a canal on command and return on command. There is also a large object retrieve. Obedience is much less precise but more demanding than other venues. The dog must heel on and off leash and beside a bicycle, and in both instances switch sides on command. There is a food refusal, an exercise where a dog must remain quiet during gunfire, and a one meter (39 inch) hedge jump, a 2.25 meter ditch jump and a 1.75 meter wooden wall.

The protection exercises include a guard of object, object search in the woods, a person search in the woods and transport of prisoners, including a simulation of an intoxicated prisoner. There is a long attack in which the dog is struck with a long stick before the bite, a call back from the long attack, an attack against the gun and a long attack to stop a person fleeing on a bicycle. The distance attacks are so long that I have seen a handicapped handler use a bicycle to move up into position to give the out command at the required time.

Historically the protective suit of the KNPV trial was relatively heavy and bulky and the helper, as also in the Belgian ring, tended to be less mobile than in the French Ring, where modern materials have been utilized to produce much lighter and more flexible suits. In spite of these heavy suits, and ancillary padding and wrapping under the jacket, bruises, abrasions and more serious injuries to the helper were not uncommon.

The modern KNPV suit is a fully padded leather suit and a separate jute suit. The firm *Dog Sport Holland* was the first to manufacture these lighter, more supple tailor made KNPV suits. Today all top level decoys use such suits weighing 10 to 13 kilograms (22 to 28 pounds). These suits are lighter, have better protection in the bite areas, are more flexible and have more effective ventilation for better cooling.

In 2007 the KNPV introduced a new program for scent work, that is searching and tracking. This program had two primary motivations, one being the recognition

of the increasing importance of olfactory or scent work in real world police applications and the second a means of bringing new, younger people into the KNPV family to reverse the loss of membership in recent years. The basic certificate, the Basiscertificaat Zoekhonden is preliminary, that is a requirement or prerequisite for all of the other programs.

The Sorteershond or Sorting Dog is a scent discrimination program, in which a number of articles with the scent of different people are placed in a rack for the dog to select. In each instance the object is a tube or pipe 20 x 20 mm x 10 cm long.

Sorteershond 1: The dog must 3 consecutive times indicate the object with the scent of a person indicated to the dog.

Sorteershond 2: The dog must indicate first the scent of an indicated person and from 2 different rows of 7, and after the first indication is successful, the scent of the suspected person out of the same rows

The tracking dog is similar to advanced IPO tracks.

Tracking dog 1: The dog must follow a 2 hour old track approximately 700 meters long on agricultural fields, with 8 90 degree corners, 3 small objects and 1 and one large object. The field can be sand/soil or grass

Tracking dog 2 : The dog must follow a 3 hour old track approximately 1400 meters on different soils (also ditches and roads) with 10 corners (with a Sharp 45 degrees corner and a 135 degrees corner and a omega) 4 small objects and a large object such as a rifle. The track must have both areas of sand or soil and grass. One half hour before the track is followed a person walks over an area of the track to provide a distraction.

Search dog 1: Find 2 persons in a 10 to 15,000 square meter wooded area. (A square 120 meters on a side)

Search dog 2. Find 2 times 3 different persons in a 20 to 30,000 square meters area. (A square 173 meters on a side.)

Rescue dog 1: Find 2 persons in ruins of buildings/trash in a 1000 square meter area.

Rescue dog 2: Twice find 3 persons in ruins of buildings/trash in a 3000 square meter area. (A square 55 meters on a side.)

Each year in the months of May, July and October, the KNPV holds certification trials in each province with enough candidates, organized by the national and provincial officers. Normally each dog certifies in his own province. The decoys and the judges for each provincial trial are designated by the national KNPV office and come from another province rather than being local.

Each year in the first weekend in September a national KNPV championship is held in the soccer stadium of FC Eindhoven in the city of Eindhoven.

Championship events include:

A PH-I championship open to the ten highest scoring dogs obtaining the PH-I certificate that year.

A PH-II championship open to the highest scoring PH-II dogs from each of the 11 provinces and the National Champion from the previous year.

An Object Guard championship for the 8 highest scoring dogs that year.

This means that a dog can compete for the coveted PH-I national championship only once in his life. For this reason, sometimes a high potential dog will be held back a year or even two to have a better chance at every KNPV trainer's dream, the national championship. From this we can see that the KNPV is much less of a sport

than for instance, Schutzhund, where a dog can compete many times. This also means that a titled dog has value only as a police dog, commercial guard dog or personal protection dog and as a breeding resource; there is no "used dog market" for trained and titled animals to be taken back into KNPV competition. (Some dogs are converted for Schutzhund, but given the age of the dogs and the differences in training and trial procedures they seldom become championship level competitors in a new sport.)

A dog may repeat an examination, but must relinquish in his current certificate. If he fails, he again becomes an uncertified dog. Repeat certification attempts are unusual, but sometimes a handler feels that his dog is better than the first score and is willing to take the risk.



Sjors , Alex van Nimwegen, Decoy J. Aarts.

Becoming a KNPV judge is a very difficult process, with a long series of challenging written and practical examinations. Each trial requires the services of three judges and two decoys.

One of the problems with all trial systems is that judges must differentiate among increasingly better dogs in order to produce winners, to know who to hand the trophies to. The best way to do this, to adapt to increasingly better dogs brought to a sharper edge by clever and persistent training, would be to introduce more complex and demanding exercises; higher jumps, longer call offs, searches in larger and more varied areas. Unfortunately in practice there is resistance to higher

standards and judges thus tend to rely increasingly on irrelevant trivialities to differentiate. If all dogs heel correctly, then perhaps the edge should go to the dog with a quicker or straighter sit or a stylish three-legged hop with the nose in the crotch of the handler. (Not to mention dogs between the legs of the waddling helper in contemporary French Ring trials.) The KNPV community has done a much better job of resisting this, and retained reasonable proximity and responsiveness in heeling, as an example, and relied on the overall length and difficulty of the program to sort the dogs out.

The typical KNPV dog goes to one trial for certification. Successful dogs, which is most of them because lesser dogs fall by the wayside during the long and arduous training process, are often sold for police service, either domestically or exported. The best dogs, particularly females, tend to be retained for breeding purposes.

A small, but very elite group of dogs go on to the annual police dog championship, but beyond this there is no such thing as a trial career, coming back to defend a championship, or multiple championships. Thus one cannot buy the winner to be a big shot next year because the dog will not be eligible to compete.

The key to the KNPV success is the ongoing relationship with the Dutch police entities. This close association has important advantages, KNPV clubs often have access to training grounds and facilities not otherwise available. Because of this official relationship certain criminal convictions preclude participation.

The Politiehond I Examination

This description of the complete Police dog one examination will give an overview of the scope and difficulty of the program:³

Morning Program

1 Swimming

a. Swim across a canal.

On command, swim 15 meters to 30 meters across canal or open water, wait & return on command.

b. Retrieve object.

Object is stick or float about 1 meter long by 20 mm or 7/8 inch.

Distance is 80 meters.

2 Jumping Exercise

a. Scaling wall – 1.75 meter or 5.7 ft. (1 meter = 3.25 ft.)

This is a vertical wall on the front, with a platform on back side.

Dog climbs wall.

b. One Meter jump – 1 meter or 39 inch.

Dog must clear the jump without touching.

c. Broad jump – 2.25 meter or 7.3 ft.

Jump and return over an open pit.

d. Refusal of found food.

Food is placed next to jumps.

3 **Small object search**

Search for 3 objects one of which must be a bullet

casing of 9mm diameter & 19 mm length. Other

2 objects are such things as coins or machine screws.

Search area is 14 meters square of grass, all dogs

using same area. The dog may have 7 minutes to

search, but only 3 minutes for full points.

4 **Heeling exercise**

Dog must switch sides on command in each phase.

a. On leash heeling.

b. Off leash heeling.

c. Heeling next to bicycle.

5 **Large object search**

Dog must search for a large object, such as a chair or

wooden box, in the woods. Upon finding object, the dog

must remain at object, bark and not bite.

6 **Man search**

Dog searches in the woods for a man, a helper wearing the suit.

Upon finding the man, the dog must guard him and bark, but

not bite. Decoy remains motionless. Decoy shouts commands

that the dog is to disregard. Dog may bite during the commands,

but must release with no commands when he becomes silent

7 **Down/Stay exercise**

Dog must remain down for 3 minutes while handler goes out of sight.

³ These rules as of April, 2013. Alice Bezemer provided information and review in this compilation.

8 Food refusal

Dog must refuse food offered by decoy and thrown on ground.

9 Prisoner Transport

Handler escorts a prisoner with a hand on his shoulder; "prisoner" pretends to be drunk and staggers. Prisoner drops object, such as a set of keys, which the dog must pick up and return to handler.

10 Object guard

Handler leaves dog to guard an object such as a blanket and stays out of sight. Helper approaches and tries to take object, dog must bite, but release and remain by object as helper retreats.

11 Silence exercise.

Dog & handler in woods must be silent during 9mm gun fire, dog must not bark.

Afternoon Program

1 Stick / Face attack

The dog is sent from a distance of 110 meters or 357 feet, the helper strikes the dog with a stick about 1.5 meter or 5 ft. long before the dog engages. "Stick" is a sapling about 1 inch at base, tapering down. After the pursuit handler and dog transport the helper over a distance of approximately 25 meters, helper then flees in the opposite direction until the dog stops him.

2 Gun attack.

In response to gun shots by helper, the dog is sent the long distance. The helper flees and is apprehended by the dog biting. After the out the helper strikes the dog three times with objects that have been placed on the ground, usually a length of rubber hose about 10 inches long. Strikes means he throws the hose at the back of the dog while on the bite, the hose remains on the ground.

3 Recall

The dog is sent from 110 meters against the helper as in the Stick/Face attack described above. When the pursuing dog is 60 meters from the starting point, he is recalled and must return to the handler.

4 Bicycle pursuit.

Dog is sent after a man fleeing on a bicycle, and must stop him. Dog either goes high to bite the arm or low to bite a leg. The leg bite is preferred; arm bite will cost one point. Almost all dogs today bite the arm. Bicycle wheel spokes & chain covered to prevent injury. After the pursuit and the out, the handler searches the helper and transports the dog, during which the helper attacks the handler. The dog must bite the helper, and release on command when he becomes still.

5 False attack

Same as Stick/Face attack above, but this time at when the dog is about 40 yards away the decoy turns around, drops stick and stands still. Dog is not allowed to bite, should pass decoy in short turn and sit or stand behind decoy to guard. Followed by transport at 2 meter distance from decoy by handler and dog.

In the afternoon protection program, the exercises are done sequentially, that is, each dog does the face attack, then each dog does the gun attack and so forth until each dog has done all five exercises. There are two judges on the field at all times in these exercises, one at the starting point and one down field.

Scoring

There are 3 separate blocks of exercises:

Block 1: 65 points.

All heeling exercises, all jumping exercises, long stay/down exercise, refusal of food found/offered, being silent and the small article search.

Block 2: 20 points

The two swimming exercises.

Block 3: 335 points

Object guard, large article search, man search, transport of prisoner, refusal to follow commands from a stranger, endurance of being hit with 3 objects during the bite, stick/face attack, throw/gun attack, recall, bike attack and false attack.

In addition to the points for these exercises, there are 10 discretionary points the judges may award for general obedience and 10 points for style and presentation of dog and handler.

Total possible points:440

Minimum points for KNPV certificate:352

Minimum points for honors, the met lof:402

Current Trends

In the Netherlands the KNPV program has seen a significant reduction in members in recent years, similar to trends in other nations. Actual annual certificates are down only moderately since the 1990s, apparently the KNPV trainers, while fewer in number, are attaining more titles on an individual basis. The dominance of the Malinois on the trial fields is ongoing. The Schutzhund style IPO training has taking root and has been expanding in popularity since the 1970s and much of the training and competition is world-class. On the other hand, the FCI affiliated *Raad van Beheer* and the Dutch conformation community is every bit as oblivious to working character as the AKC in America.

Beginning in the 1980s dogs with the Dutch police certificate were increasingly purchased for export to America and many other nations, fundamentally changing the dynamics of the system, eroding the amateur character. Sad to say, in the spirit of quick training for the money, it is a fact that dogs have been killed on KNPV training fields through unrelenting pressure in training. I know this directly and personally from two unrelated KNPV judges. This situation evolved in the 1990s just as economical video recording was becoming widely available, and there was enormous concern in the KNPV establishment that sooner or later such things would appear on the evening television news. It would seem likely that the general European trend to ban useful and benign training devices such as prong and radio controlled collars reflects some general awareness of such things.

The Dutch police program has always been different from the German model – not really a sport program in the Schutzhund sense – for once a dog obtains his PH-I certificate he can compete once more, that year, in the national championship. He

can also compete once in a PH-II championship. But an ongoing competition career is an unknown concept.

Many KNPV trainers are working class people in a crowded nation, where many can only keep one or two dogs in their home. Many dogs achieving a title are sold into police service. Although in the pre WWII era German Shepherds and Dobermans had a presence, in the post war era the Malinois and the Bouvier des Flandres became predominant. For a number of reasons, which I have discussed elsewhere, by the 1980s the Bouviers were fading and the Malinois, often without papers, was strongly predominant. When American police departments and dog brokers began to import these dogs to America they became very popular very quickly, aided by the fact that in general they were similar in appearance to the German Shepherd and thus looked like a police dog to the American eye.

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