

Dog Talk

The official *unofficial* newsletter for FEMA dog handlers

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USAR Canine Team Questionnaire

We are collecting this data because we feel that USAR canine teams are woefully misunderstood and misrepresented. While there are teams dedicated to emerging search technology like rescue robots, very little is ever written about a technology that is "state of the art" because everyone thinks they understand it--we don't. We are a research team that is trying to enhance canine search. In order to do this we need to understand the realities of those that actually are part of an USAR canine team.

If you do not wish to reveal your name, we would appreciate it if you could provide us with as much detail about where you work and what you do as possible. If you choose to complete all or part of the questionnaire, your answers will remain confidential.

To make it worth your while, a summary of our findings will be published in a future issue of Dogtalk once we have analysed the results of the survey. I request your assistance in gathering data to be used to produce a better understanding of canine teams that serve a role in Urban Search and Rescue.

You are under no obligation to answer any of the 25 questions in this questionnaire. If you wish to remain anonymous, but still provide some answers, do not answer questions 1, 2 or 3.

NOTE: We have included the question in a separate Word Document so you can answer and e-mail response. Thanks

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Proposal for a University of Pennsylvania Working Dog Center at Willow Grove Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base

The University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine is enthused about a potential new project that we would like to share with the US&R canine community. Five years ago, 2 veterinarians at Penn Vet had a great vision for a working dog center. Unfortunately, due to the usual limitations, space and money, the vision went dormant, but not forgotten. With the public announcement of the scheduled shut down of a local Naval Air Station, in the northeast Philadelphia region, an opportunity to establish such a working dog center seemed possible. It was clear to the officials involved that the goals of this project are consistent with the mandate that all projects proposed to operate at Willow Grove must benefit the Department of Homeland Security. A group at Penn Vet, led by Dr Cindy Otto, a member of PATF-1, has proposed the development and construction of a facility to breed and select dogs specifically for detection work. This facility will provide training, conditioning, and rehabilitation of the working dog and perform clinical trials to benefit all detection dogs. The facility will include a clinic devoted to working and performance dogs and their special needs, including reproduction, rehabilitation, sports medicine, nutrition, and behavior. Penn Vet has requested approximately 25 acres at the Willow Grove site and this would potentially include, 2 rubble piles, building search areas, an agility field, a directional field, a tracking field, obedience field, exercise areas, a large indoor training facility, kennels, a rehab/sports medicine facility and hopefully more. This facility would meet FEMA standards for evaluations, courses and prep tests. Currently, the Joint Interagency Installation Department for Willow Grove has listed Penn Vet as a 'probable' tenant at Willow Grove and has indicated potential space for a working dog center in the Willow Grove foot print. Although, the center is not definite and there are still many 'If's', we have been counseled to establish an advisory committee and to explore possibilities for funding the center. Hopefully in the coming months, we'll have a more definitive answer regarding the space at Willow Grove and we will be sure to keep you posted! If anyone has any questions, comments or concerns, please contact me at the following email address: Durso@vet.upenn.edu or call me at 215-573-6553.

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Taking Time To Consider a Few Things For The Next K9 Prospect.

Melody Greba/ IN-TF1

If I am looking to purchase a dog, I base it on what I intend to do with it. I eventually need a K9 with strong natural search drive; desire to work with me; independent enough to work steadily away from me; strong play/ball drive; steadfast nerves; and with genetically inclined, working-capacity to handle long days, as well as being confident and empowered to handle all the situations that I intend to ask of him.

This is no short order.

I will evaluate my breed choice(s) and more specifically the bloodlines/type, and not base my selection, purely or solely on titles (especially from other disciplines) or from the breed's legacy. However, outside titles and customary breed characteristics are a helpful, beginning guideline but not the sole basis.

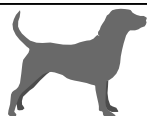
Overall breed traits are a broad focus, however, I will isolate specific, desirable characteristics to seek out the best candidate for the job and decide if the breed's weaknesses are within my abilities as a trainer and my immediate resources to contend with.

I will choose a breeder who has a reputation that fits my goals. Each breeder that is active within a working discipline will breed to their type or style of dog. This type may or may not fit directly into the USA R K9 needs or my training style. There are many styles of working candidates within each breed and each working discipline.

If I am looking for the best candidate to begin, then I will seek a breeder who has the ethics that would supply me a dog that fits it.

Staying focused on the essentials for the job will prevent a hasty and/or emotional decision which can prove to be painstaking in making the grade or decline to a totally fruitless experience and expensive venture. The K9 USAR position is a difficult task in the working K9 services. Staying the course for a wise selection will assist in handler fulfillment for USAR employment. Most importantly our victims are reliant on top-notch K9 teams.

Their lives may depend on it.





I wanted to let you know that we euthanized Kita on May 12, 2008. For those who hadn't already heard, she was diagnosed with cancer of her urethra about 5 weeks before, with some symptoms the previous couple weeks.

We did all we could to make her comfortable, but in the end, her quality of life was poor and she seemed uncomfortable much of the time. Her euthanasia was very peaceful and calm in our front yard and she passed away with her head in my lap.

We are grateful that she had a fulfilling and sometimes rather exciting life, and that we were able to share it with her. Godspeed to the land of never-ending tennis balls and interesting things to bark at, Kita!

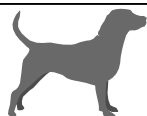
Jane, Lance, William and Diana
WA-TF1

CLASSIFIEDS

The Classifieds Section has been added to support FEMA handlers who manufacture, or are agents for search dog training equipment and accessories. It will be restricted to one page/edition on a first-in, first-served basis at the discretion of the Editor

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☆☆☆☆Kudos to.....☆☆☆☆

DOGTALK is pleased to announce that the following Canine Search Teams have recently gained certification (or re-certification) as FEMA US&R Canine Search Specialists:

☆☆ Dayton, OH Results – April 2008

Darrell Wilkerson & Buster (OH-TF1), Susann Brown & Rose (TX-TF1), Pam Bennett & Cynder (OH-TF1), Gail McCarthy & Bacco (MA-TF1), Janet Merrill & Chai (MA-TF1), Sharon Grant & Xaros (MD-TF1), Michael Lueck & Sandy Cay (TX-TF1), Katie Breland & Ice (TX-TF1), Craig Veldheer & Pepsi (OH-TF1), Tony Zintsmaster & Kaiser (IN-TF1), Mike Agnew & Kenya (NE-TF1), Tara Aarndt & Johnny Ringo (NE-TF1), Neil Campbell & Ranger (NY-TF1), Anthony Campitello & Caesar (NY-TF1), Lisa Crowder & Sam (OH-TF1), Kathleen Baska & Calvary (MO-TF1), Amos Hess & Apollo (PA-TF1), Tom Brown & Dakota (PA-TF1), Tracy MacDonald & Shadow (TN-TF1), Charlie Smith & Desi (TN-TF1), Jon Cain & Ajax (UT-TF1), Kathy Petrere & Nunzi (IN-TF1) and Brent Frain & Gardez (MD-TF1)

☆☆ Mira Loma, CA Results – April 2008

Sharon Gattas & Aubry (CA-TF6), Tim Odebralski & Nikko (CA-TF6), Susan Vodrazka & Hero (CA-TF5), Jim Boggeri & Recon (CA-TF4), Bob Deeds & Gracie (TX-TF1), Marco Maldonado & Hattie (CA-TF8) and John Dean & Pic (AZ-TF1)

☆☆ Denver, CO Results – May 2008

Hilda Wood & Flash (FL-TF1), John Redd & Baylee (NV-TF1), Bryan Morgan & Ruby (NV-TF1), Chantel Rose & Scout (CA-TF3) and Chris Holmes & Cazo (VA-TF1)

Please forward any news, scheduled events, letters to the editor, or other info you want disseminated via **DOGTALK**, the underground canine newsletter to Anne McCurdy: amccurdy@clarian.org

