

NATIONAL SEARCH DOG ALLIANCE

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

PICK OF THE PACK

Selecting Your Canine SAR Partner



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PICK OF THE PACK: Selecting Your Canine SAR Partner

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Dedicated to the many canine handlers who, in anonymity, donate countless hours and personal funds in service of their communities; and to their canine partners whose hearts and devotion to their task make it all possible.

WILDERNESS AIR-SCENT



Fanta (Border Collie Mix)



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Chapter 1 The CANINE TEMPERAMENT

Selecting the proper dog for search and rescue (SAR) training is exciting and rewarding. You are choosing a partner that will work with you as a team to search for missing people. During your journey to certification you both will put in countless hours of training together. With perseverance and patience, that commitment will payoff by resulting in an incredible working relationship with your canine partner. You will be one step ahead by choosing a puppy or dog with the best chance to excel at SAR work. Remember, in SAR, peoples' lives are in peril and they are relying on you to have the best dog for the job! Good intentions will not compensate for a mediocre dog.

There are a number of factors which should be considered when choosing a dog for SAR work. Canine fitness, structure, size and breeding are important. These qualities must be combined with proper temperament: trainability, sociability, drives, self-confidence, and the ability to stay focused when immersed in sensory and physical distraction (nerve strength). The more instinctive and intense these characteristics are in your dog, the more reliable and predictable his response will be during the challenging conditions of searches. Also, consider the age of the dog. It will take 1-2 years to train to a basic certification and dogs will keep learning with every new training or mission scenario they experience. A seasoned dog with years of experience working different scent pictures is an invaluable asset to any search mission. So begin with a dog young enough to have a long and productive career once certified.

Heritage

First, our partners must be able to perform the job we are asking them to do. While SAR training should be fun and motivational, an actual search can be stressful, as well as physically and emotionally demanding for both the handler and the canine. You and your partner must be able to work long hours through difficult terrain, often under harsh, challenging and distracting environmental conditions. Research your breed carefully and know what temperament is characteristic of the breed and what genetic diseases may be prevalent, such as inherited eye diseases like progressive retinal atrophy, clotting diseases like Von Willibrand's, or structural disorders like dysplasia.

BREEDING KENNELS: If you select a puppy from a reputable breeder, first and foremost check for genetic lines clear of hip and elbow dysplasia. Visiting the website for the breed's parent club will often provide a wealth of information on temperament and diseases. No breed is without health issues and even the best breeder can produce a dog that has health problems. Good breeders will be honest about documenting diseases in their dogs' ancestry. Non-profit organizations and commercial laboratories offer testing and registries from which the breeders should have documentation demonstrating multi-generational testing of their breeding lines.

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Animal Health Trust

(DNA; http://www.aht.org.uk/sci_disc_genetics_dna.html#canine)

Canine Eye Registration Foundation

(CERF; <http://www.vmdb.org/cerf.html>)

Orthopedic Foundation for Animals

(OFA; <http://www.offa.org/>)

PennGen

(DNA; <http://www.vet.upenn.edu/penngen/>)

University of Pennsylvania Hip Improvement Program

(PennHip; <http://www.pennhip.org/>)

Optigen Health Registry

(DNA; <http://www.optigen.com/>)

University of Missouri

(DNA; <http://www.caninegeneticdiseases.net>)

University of Florida

(DNA; <http://neuro.vetmed.ufl.edu/dm>)

VetGen

(DNA; <http://www.vetgen.com>)

Veterinary Medical Databases

(DNA; <http://www.vmdb.org/dna.html>)

In addition, pay close attention to the temperament and trainability of the sire and dam. Inquire about the puppy's upbringing and be sure that the breeder has socialized the puppy from an early age with other people and dogs. The breeder should have introduced the puppy, in a supportive manner, to different environments, noises, and situations. Some breeders, familiar with the requirements of a SAR dog, will go the extra mile to imprint future human remains (HR) dogs on HR material from a young age, to expose the puppies to various surfaces and obstacles to acclimate them for disaster work, or to have future trailing dogs track short distances for their supper as puppies.

RESCUED and SHELTER DOGS: Many good SAR dogs, of mixed and purebred lineages, are rescues. Often high drive dogs do not make good household pets for the general public. Sadly, many of these dogs end up at the local pound or with a rescue organization where they are difficult to place and at risk of being euthanized because they are just too much for their owners to handle. When given a job and an outlet for their energy and intelligence, these dogs not only make excellent SAR dogs, but they become calmer in the household as well. However, if you acquire a dog from a shelter or rescue group, there is an additional risk of genetic and temperament disorders because you do not know the parentage or early environmental experiences of your partner. Therefore, test a rescued dog thoroughly before you decide to take him on as your partner.

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Jeremy's Story: Jeremy was a German Shepherd Dog (GSD) that originally came from Orange County Animal Services. Jeremy was a real mess and was scheduled to be euthanized. But you could see the potential in him as he cocked his head from side to side, and sat quietly listening to everyone discuss his fate and the condition he was in. At only 7 to 9 months old, he had been

through a lot; but his luck was about to change. A handler saw the potential in Jeremy and chose him as her partner.

They immediately started obedience training. It was not an easy path. Jeremy struggled with dog aggression and separation anxiety issues. With constant training and behavior modification, Jeremy was able to overcome these issues. As he flourished in his new environment, he became more confident. He not only passed his AKC Good Citizenship test, he obtained an AKC Companion Dog obedience title. He had proven to his handler that his temperament was solid and he was now ready to start SAR training.

Jeremy excelled at trailing. He was always eager to work. Once he scented the article he was off and there was no stopping him until he found his victim. He did like to cheat! If the wind was in his favor, he took the shortest path to his victim. Jeremy taught his track layers how to set up a trail! Jeremy was working 18 hour old tracks when he was diagnosed with degenerative myelopathy. He retired and spent the next 9 months being a loving companion. He is sadly missed by his handler and those who knew him. He was a special boy.

If you are entering canine SAR for the first time, ask a handler, certified in the discipline you are going to pursue, to help you with the dog selection process. Having a second set of eyes can help. Do your research and partner with your breeder to give your puppy every advantage.

Are Your Skills a Match or a Mismatch to Your Dog's Temperament?

HANDLER SKILLS: It is also vital that handlers honestly assess their own abilities as dog trainers. A mismatch between a dog's temperament and a handler's training skills will be distressing for both team members. Inexperienced handlers will not be able to

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adequately control and redirect very bossy dogs. These dogs can become frustrated, destructive, and/or aggressive without proper supervision and guidance. When partnered with experienced handlers, these domineering dogs make exquisite SAR partners. When partnered with inexperienced handlers, their vital contribution to the SAR community as a working dog will be lost due to inadequate and unskillful handling. A beginning handler should start with a less assertive (though not passive) partner. This will help the handler learn the proper training skills necessary to eventually partner with a very high drive, focused dog.

There are Other Factors to Consider When Choosing a Partner:

CLIMATE and TERRAIN: Match the climate and terrain type in your area to your dog's coat texture, length and thickness. Will a double-coated dog be too hot to work for extended periods of time in warm Southern climates? Will a short coated dog be too cold to be effective in Northern climates? Are there burrs in your area that will easily get tangled in a long coat?



SIZE: There are several reasons to consider size. If you and your partner are expected to search 160 acres of thick brush in less than 4 hours, does your dog possess the stamina and size to accomplish this feat? Can your dog traverse a collapsed structure with multiple downed 4' tall girder beams. If your dog is only ten inches high, how will he fare in a two foot snow drift? Small dogs are at a definite disadvantage if these are the jobs

they are being asked to do. On the other hand, are you strong enough to easily lift your 120 pound dog over a four foot fence while doing a wilderness search? Can you carry your dog to an evacuation point, 200 yards up the hill should he become injured and unable to walk on his own? These are questions you need to consider before you decide on a breed. Think about your area, terrain, discipline and physical strength. Additionally, consider your living quarters and whether the breed size and energy level fits your household space, your vehicle size, and available exercise areas.

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QUESTIONS TO ASK A BREEDER:

General Background:

Are your dogs bred for conformation, field, service/law enforcement or pet purposes?

Can I acquire a copy of the sire and dam's pedigree and any SAR certifications, working, performance or conformation titles, and health certifications?

Have the sire and dam been previously bred, where were the pups placed and what certifications, titles, and health reports have been obtained on them?

What health problems are common to this breed and what is the status of health of the dogs in the breeders' lines?

Have OFA, PennHip or CERF certification, blood tests, etc. been performed and do you have documentation of the results?

Can I see the sire and dam? If unavailable, ask about structure, temperament and drive?

How old is the dam and how often has the dam been bred?

Can I have the contact information of others who have bought puppies from you and of your veterinarian?

How long have you been a breeder and which and how many breeds have you bred?

The Current Litter Status:

How many puppies were in the litter, were there any difficulties with delivery or have there been any health problems with the puppies or dam since birth?

Where were the pups raised; inside with the family or outside in a kennel?

Have the puppies been trained in any way, such as crate training, potty training, etc.?

What was done with the puppies in terms of socialization and enrichment?

Have the puppies been to the vet, wormed, given shots, dewclaws removed?

Administrative:

What guarantees do you offer on your puppies (health and performance)?

Do you require a sales contract or have any restrictions on the ownership or future breeding of the dog?

Do you require spay/neutering of your pet quality puppies?

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QUESTIONS TO ASK SHELTER PERSONNEL:

For brevity all sources (shelter, rescue or foster home) are referred to as "shelter".

General Background:

Was the dog an owner surrender, found as a stray, impounded, born at the shelter, etc.?

Why was the dog relinquished?

Is there any information on this dog's history? Any pedigree papers?

Do you have the previous owner's contact information?

May the previous owners be contacted and asked for medical records, parentage, behavioral problems, performance titles and history?

May I acquire a copy of the pedigree and any certifications?

If the puppy is from a litter at the shelter:

Have the dam and other puppies been examined by a veterinarian?

How many other puppies were born in the litter?

Does the mother or puppies have any known health problems?

Can I see the dam? How old is the dam?

Where were the pups raised; inside with a family or outside in a kennel?

What have you observed about the dog's structure and temperament?

What health problems are common to this breed or mix of breeds?

Has the dog been to the vet, wormed, given shots, dewclaws removed?

Have any health tests been performed and do you have documentation of the results?

If fostered, may I talk to or get references from the foster families?

Has the dog received any obedience, crate, or potty training, etc.?

What was done in terms of socialization and enrichment?

What temperament and behavioral qualities have you noticed in this dog?

How well does the dog interact with other dogs, animals and strangers?

Do you feel this dog has the temperament to be a SAR or working dog?

Administrative:

Do you have any restrictions on the ownership of the dog (i.e., re-homing if the dog develops a health problem or is not an ideal fit for SAR)?

Will you assist in re-homing the dog as a household pet?

May I take the dog for a short trial period to determine if he acclimates well in my home?

May I take the dog for a short trial period to determine if he has the temperament for SAR work?

If I cover the costs, may I have the dog examined by my veterinarian for x-rays, DNA, blood testing and a general medical exam?

Temperaments

The temperament of a canine encompasses many aspects, such as personality, problem solving potential, disposition, instinct, and drive. The dog's innate response and drive is a component of instinct. We can all observe certain temperaments that are frequently seen within specific breeds: Golden Retrievers who constantly seek attention; the more reserved Chesapeake Bay Retrievers; German Shepherd Dogs (GSD) who bond strongly with their family; Labrador Retrievers who are everyone's friend; the protective and ever vigilant nature of the Doberman Pinscher; or the playful, unconcerned nature of a spaniel; the Border Collie's intense desire to stalk and herd everything, etc. Familiarity with these breed temperaments is helpful when choosing a SAR dog. It strongly influences the style of training required. When training dogs, a one-size-fits-all approach does not work; your training style must fit your dog's temperament.

In addition, within the structure of a dog pack, there are characteristic behaviors associated with dominant ranking alpha members on down to the submissive, playful, omega member. The temperaments associated with rank within the pack can be very characteristic. As a handler you should match your personality, ability, and training style to that of your partner. Some handlers do extremely well with alpha dogs, while others have training styles which work better with dogs with less pushy, more amiable personalities.

Hard and Soft Temperaments

T. Barber (1997) described dogs in terms of hard and soft temperaments. If we relate those temperaments to potential SAR dog prospects and handler skills, it would look something like this:

VERY-HARD: Always looking for a fight; very difficult to deal with; insists on being the boss and will challenge his owner's authority; can become aggressive and untrustworthy; needs a hard, strong-willed person who can demand total respect. These dogs are unsuitable for SAR work.

MEDIUM-HARD: Have a very strong protective instinct; are outgoing, self-confident and highly intelligent; usually dominant, but can be totally trusted with family and children; needs a firm handler who must establish consistent leadership. These dogs are very resilient and can make an excellent SAR candidate in the hands of an experienced and skilled handler.

MEDIUM-SOFT: Passive, but definitely not a coward and does not exhibit any of the shy dog syndromes. Have a stable, sound, happy attitude; very willing worker, eager to please; friendly toward strangers; can be trained to attack on command, but will rarely mean business unless totally convinced he is in real danger. Can make an excellent SAR candidate and is a good temperament for most handlers.

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SOFT: Passive and friendly; stable; not interested in a fight, but willing to give his life for his family; appears very easy going and laid back, but never lacks courage when needed, or the intelligence to use it wisely; willing to please and makes an excellent obedience prospect. Some of these dogs may be suitable for SAR work if they have strong drives for a trainer to utilize. Evaluate them carefully and be honest about their limitations, particularly when under stress. Handlers who lack the “fun gene” do not work well with these dogs as they may apply too much pressure and cause the dog to lose self-confidence. These dogs are not resilient to harsh training techniques or stressful situations.

VERY-SOFT: Dull, no personality; doesn't care what happens to him or anyone else; will exhibit very little interest in anything; does not want to work or play. Not a good prospect for SAR because this dog would be difficult to motivate and train for SAR work and would likely lack reliability under stressful conditions.

SHY: Spooks, bolts, or jumps without provocation; refuses to approach friendly strangers and shows unreasonable fear; submissive in even a slightly questionable situation; may be friendly and secure with his family, but does not possess a good temperament. Shyness can also be mistaken for aggression. An extremely shy dog can be so terrified of everything around him that he is always fighting for his life out of sheer terror. This dog is unstable and may bite out of fear. These dogs are unsuitable for SAR work.

Pack Status

Some think of dog packs as a group of subordinate individuals continually vying for status while being restrained by a dominant alpha dog or pair. The alpha status denotes the leader or top-ranking dog in a kind of social hierarchy, followed by the beta and so on down to the lowest ranking member, the omega. Rank is actively portrayed in



Echo and pups (Belgian Malinois)

postures during social interaction, and specific behavioral temperaments are associated with specific rank within the pack. The more dominant temperaments generally rank higher than the more submissive temperaments.

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Leadership in the pack does not imply dominance by aggression or intimidation. Successful alpha dogs are fair, consistent, and concerned for the welfare of all pack members. Fighting is rare in well-led packs. Play, on the other hand, is a vital function in every pack and serves to increase pack bonds and relieve stress.

In a Wyoming SAR "pack," **Bloodhound, Herc**, is the alpha male and **Australian Shepherd/Border Collie, Lizzie**, is the alpha female. Both dogs tend to stay a short distance away during active play among the pack members. If play becomes too aggressive, one of the alphas will intervene by running between the two roughest dogs and growling or barking. Then play becomes less aggressive because the alpha said it should be so. Brady, a Border Collie mix, is the unchallenged omega of the group. When a Ridgeback, Aspen, joined the group and turned on her back to submit to him, he didn't have a clue what his reaction should be and looked around in confusion. Some humans feel sorry for the omega dog, but this dog can play a vital role in the pack by initiating play and relieving stress.

A pack is often interpreted as a rigid, force-based social ranking. However, another view depicts the "pack" as a family. In his studies of wolves, David Mech (2000), describes the wolf pack as "...a family, with the adult parents guiding the activities of the group in a division-of-labor system in which the female predominates primarily in such activities as pup care and defense and the male primarily during foraging and food-provisioning and the travels associated with them." In wolves, where social status often corresponds to physiological and behavioral differences related to current rank, the alpha male does not have an inherent permanent social status (Fox 1971; Fox and Andrews 1973). In natural wolf packs, the alpha male and female are usually the breeding pair, the parents of the pack. In cases of large packs with multiple litters, the older breeders are probably dominant to the younger breeders (Mech et al. 1998). An age-based order also exists where the current breeders are at the top and offspring or

non-breeders are subordinate. Parents inherit natural dominance over younger offspring, and pups often defer to adults and older siblings in a peaceful, submissive manner. With time, some subordinate members will disperse from the pack and integrate into other packs or establish packs of their own. In addition, older members may lose status due to injury or infirmity and as older members pass on, younger subordinates can assume positions of increased status and rank.

Evaluating the dogs



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The importance of this information for the SAR handler is two-fold. One, certain behavioral characteristics and temperaments are associated with a dog's status within a pack. Two, status can change with time and circumstances. Therefore logically, behavioral characteristics can be modified with changes in pack status.

While a dog's basic temperament can be observed at puppyhood, keep in mind that what is observed may be situational and highly influenced by environment and handling. From a training standpoint, it correlates that a very bossy, dominant dog can be made more congenial under the proper leadership of an experienced handler. Along the same lines, with apt guidance, confidence can be brought out in a more submissive dog.



Therefore, use temperament tests as a guide to a dog's current mind-set (a snapshot in time) and a measure of the dog's potential given proper environment and management. When choosing a dog based on temperament evaluations, consider both, the desired temperament necessary to perform SAR, and the dog training skills of the handler.

Scientific Comment: One must be careful in one's interpretation of behavioral tests. S. Lindsay (2005) describes introvert, extrovert, stable and unstable temperaments and discusses the detrimental effects of misinterpretation of temperament test results. For example, excess exuberance in self-assured dogs can be misinterpreted as social dominance. The subsequent application of incompatible training techniques will affect the way in which a puppy responds to learning. This demonstrates the capacity of training interactions to change a puppy's behavior and self-confidence. For example, heavy-handed training techniques applied inappropriately to a dog may transform a once self-confident puppy into a shy or aggressive animal.

Canine Drives

Whether different canine "drives" exist as an exclusive behavioral trait is a source of debate. In the world of behavioral sciences, to speak in terms of drives is an imprecise, oversimplification of complex behaviors, and these drive types have not been verified by scientific method. For our purposes however, discussing "drive" is a

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way of breaking down instinct into categories that can help us to evaluate the dog for its trainability and potential as a SAR candidate. A basic definition of drive is a dog's motivation to obtain something, be it physical contact, food, prey, toys, or distance. However, as with most canine training topics, there are many ways to describe drive and just as many opinions about how to assess it. Wendy Volhard describes four types of drives: prey, pack, fight, and flight (Volhard and Volhard, 2005). Brownell, Marsolais and Hawn describe six basic types of drive: prey, pack, defense, food, hunt and play (Brownell et al., 2000).

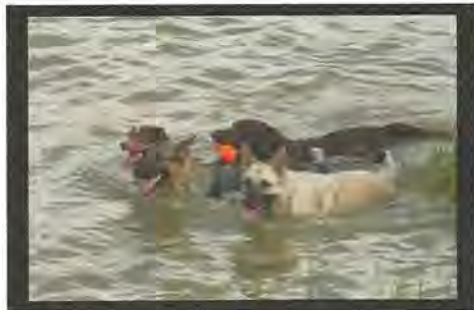
The following are short descriptions of the principal drives. All dogs have a combination of these drives, and each drive can exist in a range of intensities. We've stated when a specific drive is highly beneficial for SAR work. However, this doesn't imply it's the only drive required or the only factor to consider when evaluating a dog for SAR work. A good SAR dog is always a blend of appropriate intensities in each of the drives. It should also be noted that scientific validation of the reliability of temperament tests as sole predictors of future dog behavior does not exist.



PACK/SOCIAL DRIVE: is the canine's desire to be a member of the pack or "team", and thus to work with the handler. The dog can be dominant or subordinate, but has a strong desire to work within the framework of the pack, to conform to pack rules, and to interact with other pack members. Good SAR dogs have a well established and stable pack drive. They have been well socialized since puppyhood to read and interact appropriately with other living

things. Their pack should consist of both the human and nonhuman variety. Good live-find SAR dogs must like people. Finding the person at the end of the search should, in itself, be rewarding to the dogs. This is essential to their motivation to search. Dogs with strong pack drive are willing and cooperative and enjoy working, often just for praise and attention.

Compulsion techniques, sometimes called punishment-based, are basically not needed to work with these dogs. Canines with domineering pack drive are tough for the inexperienced handler to control and such a mismatch can result in aggressive behavior from the dog. For the experienced handler, an assertive dog can become an outstanding search



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partner. Canines with diminished pack drive may be timid around team members and are just as problematic for inexperienced handlers. Improper pressure placed on these dogs by the handlers, may result in a decrease in self-confidence and fear-biting.



Dixie (Labrador Retriever)

entertain themselves, or fervently annoy others to interact with them. They are easily rewarded with a brisk game of tug-of-war, fetch, or chase. These dogs are usually eager to work even in harsh, grueling conditions thus making them ideal candidates for search work. Dogs with diminished play drive are difficult to motivate to work under inclement conditions and may not have the resilience necessary to do the extended intense work required of search dogs. Play drive is vital for SAR work, for motivating the dog, and relieving stress during training and missions.



Ellie (Labrador Retriever)

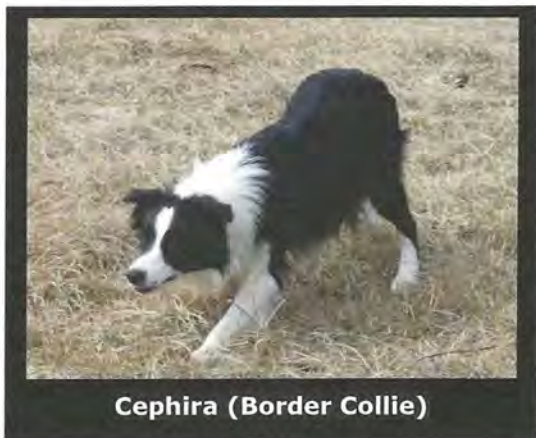


Turbo (German Wire-haired Pointer Mix)

FOOD DRIVE: is a basic drive in all canines but manifests in varying degrees as the desire to seek and obtain food. Canines with high food drive are eager to work for that, oh so satisfying, savory reward at the end of the task. These dogs are very animated and demonstrative, making them easier to train than dogs with low food drive. Like play drive dogs, the object of their obsession, in this case food, can be used to keep them highly motivated and focused on the task at hand. Dogs high in food drive are also superb candidates for SAR work.

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PREY DRIVE: is the intense desire to pursue, capture, bite and carry prey. It is often described as being initiated visually, unlike hunt drive, which requires no visual stimuli. The differences between prey and hunt drive, if they exist, are more of a continuum and may not be so clear cut. Some prey drive is necessary for success in SAR work. It is self-motivating and self-rewarding for the dog. This drive is often combined with play/retrieve or food drive as the



Cephira (Border Collie)

object of the chase becomes a subject with a toy or food in SAR training. However, this drive must be tempered around livestock and wildlife or these canines will become distracted and be turned from the task of finding a person or human remains (HR). High prey drive dogs like their reward to be a toy in motion or a tug.

The Bloodhound, Teke, has such a strong hunt drive that he begins, without a command, trailing anyone who has left the staging area. Once he is called back and commanded to trail, he is totally dedicated until he finds the subject. He'll accept his food reward, but immediately begins back trailing the victim. For Teke, his hunt drive eclipses almost everything else in his world.



Rubicon (Chesapeake Bay Retriever)

HUNT DRIVE: is described as the canine's persistent desire to search for prey that is not immediately visible, primarily using their nose. Canines with strong hunt drive excel at SAR work. It is the most important drive for

search work and is absolutely required for success in tracking/trailing. This drive, when combined with strong food or play drive, makes for an exceptional SAR partner. As with prey drive, this drive is self-motivating and self-rewarding to the search dog

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and must be refocused from livestock and wildlife toward the intended SAR target of live human or HR scent.

DEFENSE/FIGHT DRIVE: is the strong desire by the canine to fight to protect itself and its pack, to repulse invasion of its territory, and to protect its captured prey from others. It can also be the desire to initiate and persist in confrontation. It is a drive prized in canines used for police/military protection work, but it can be problematic for SAR dogs. While these dogs have the much desired characteristics of confidence and nerve strength, a handler must be very experienced, ever vigilant of their dog's behavior, and must have control over their canine to prevent them from protecting their found subject from approaching rescue workers. Many teams are hesitant to allow a dog to be trained in protection work if they plan to do SAR work. Again under a very experienced trainer this is achievable, but the associated legal liabilities need to be considered.



FLIGHT/SELF-PRESERVATION DRIVE: is a strong reaction of self-preservation. This might in fact be a type of defense drive used to replace a fight reaction (e.g. a



fight or flight response). Self-preservation is the animal's primary motivation and various levels of flight will be seen corresponding to a range of dominant and submissive behaviors. Often dominance and submission are a cause and effect relationship leading to confrontation within a pack. However, these are fluid and dependent on the status of the two animals that are interacting.

A tendency for a particular response is connected to a dog's innate temperament. As mentioned by Volhard (2005), more confident animals are likely to defend or engage in combat if threatened, whereas less confident individuals are likely to avoid or flee a situation. When cornered, dogs that possess little or no self-confidence may bite out of fear, as they have no other course of action to relieve the stress being forced upon them.

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It is important to point out that many of these drives have overlapping qualities and it is often difficult to draw the line between them. Prey and hunt drive are often considered to be one category of motivation, with hunting merely a component of prey, as chasing prey often involves using all of the senses to accomplish capture. Likewise then, food drive overlaps in this continuum as well. The higher the motivation to obtain food, the higher the likelihood prey and hunt behaviors will be displayed. Similarly, play drive can manifest at the end of the hunt or the chase in the form of a tug-of-war game or shaking of and playing with the prey item.

So you want to be a SAR Dog –

Unfortunately, balanced, confident, intelligent, driven, sociable dogs are the exception not the rule. It is a sad fact that few dogs will actually have the combination of stability and high drive that it takes to certify and be a SAR dog. When you are considering a dog for SAR work you are looking for a specific combination of characteristics that motivate the dog to do the job and do it well. The same qualities that help a SAR dog to excel are not the same characteristics that one looks for when choosing a family pet.



Additionally, no SAR dog is the perfect collection of high drives in all the desired categories. Each dog will display a mixed assortment of drives in a range of quantity and quality. A good SAR dog will be able to focus through intense distraction and use every molecule of its tactile, auditory, visual and olfactory senses to accomplish the task of finding the lost person or remains. As a handler, you can only try to evaluate temperament in order to make the best possible choice from the puppies or dogs at hand. Through this assessment process, it is possible to gauge the strengths and weaknesses in an individual dog and

either eliminate the dog as a candidate, or place the dog with an appropriate handler and design training techniques to enhance its strengths, compensate for its weaknesses, and diminish any undesirable behaviors. Every canine team will have its training challenges, but when the right handler works with the right dog, the end result is a great team that is ready to serve the community.

Your Partner, Your Responsibility

Remember that finding the perfect dog for SAR, is a serious endeavor. You should never buy the first car you look at, and likewise, you shouldn't take home the first dog you evaluate. Seriously weigh bringing a new dog into your home. It is not a venture to be taken lightly. Carefully consider, thoroughly research, and make the right

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decision. Don't rush into something based on how cute the puppy is, how impressive the dog's pedigree is, or how much the rescued dog needs your help. It is essential that you evaluate many possible candidates for your canine SAR partner, compare and contrast, before selecting one. It is not unreasonable to take several months to find the right partner. It can be frustrating at times, especially when other team members are already training their dogs or are mission-ready. However, think about the consequences of picking a dog that is not a fit for your family or for SAR. It is better to "look (extensively) before you leap."

Once you make the commitment to a particular dog, take that commitment seriously. No SAR dog should ever end up in a shelter. Make arrangements in case of an accident or illness, for the safe care of your SAR partner with your family, friends or other SAR team members. You take full responsibility for this dog regardless of how the dog does in SAR. If he does not certify, he will become your household pet. In that capacity, these dogs will still need other outlets for their energy, whether it be sport competitions or just a daily jog. Some people are not in a situation to keep additional dogs. In those cases where it is necessary to find your dog a new home, it will take a bit of work. However, finding an ideal home for the dog is paramount and it's your responsibility.

Take Home Points to Remember

- **Know what is required of a SAR dog in the discipline you want to pursue. A SAR dog requires a specific temperament to do the job and not every dog has this temperament, in fact few do.**
- **Consider fitness, structure, size, and breeding, along with the proper trainability, sociability, drives, self-confidence, and nerve-strength.**
- **While a dog's basic temperament can be observed at puppyhood, keep in mind that what is observed may be situational and highly influenced by environment and handling.**
- **Drives have overlapping qualities and are not black and white. Be honest in your assessments, remember that peoples' lives are at stake.**
- **Do not rush into choosing a SAR partner. Take your time, do your homework, and choose the dog that has the best chance of succeeding. Remember, as a responsible SAR partner, you are taking on the responsibility for this dog's lifelong care whether or not he makes it to certification.**

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WATER RECOVERY



Stella (German Shorthaired Pointer)

Chapter 2 TEMPERAMENT EVALUATIONS

SAR dogs generally come from working, herding, hound and sporting breeds. These breeds have been bred many generations for their trainability and their ability to hunt with their noses. They are athletic, agile, sociable breeds with stamina. These traits can be used for searching for lost humans, but are not guaranteed in every dog. If you are thinking about spending at least two years, several times a week training and molding a dog, you want to begin with the best possible starting material. Therefore over the years, people have developed methods to test individual dogs for the traits they think will predict a dog's aptitude, given proper training, to become a certified SAR partner.

This chapter will focus on the various parts of the evaluation process important to selecting a dog for SAR. Much controversy has been attached to temperament testing since its inception. Some trainers, behaviorists and breeders are firmly convinced of its value in assessing dogs. Others consider it a waste of time, or worse, so inaccurate that good dogs are judged incorrectly. Incorrect application or interpretation of a test can lead to very real consequences especially in rescue or shelter settings where animals may be euthanized if they fail specific parts.

In reality, very few long-term (longitudinal) scientific studies that look at puppy behavior as a predictor of adult temperament have been done. It is interesting that the behavior of wild canids (e.g. wolves, jackals, and coyotes) has been more extensively studied than the domestic dog, which has been an important part of the society of man for thousands of years. Slabbert (1999) explains how some methods currently used

in puppy testing are unrelated to the natural behavior of wild dogs and canids. For example, physically holding a puppy in the air is supposed to imitate the way dogs dominate one another. However, dogs do not lift each other off the ground in a demonstration of dominance. Therefore, being suspended in the air is

Definitions -

Scientific study: a study conducted with proper design, sample size, controls and statistical validation, that then undergoes the scrutiny of peer-review to uncover any flaws in interpretation of results and conclusions drawn.

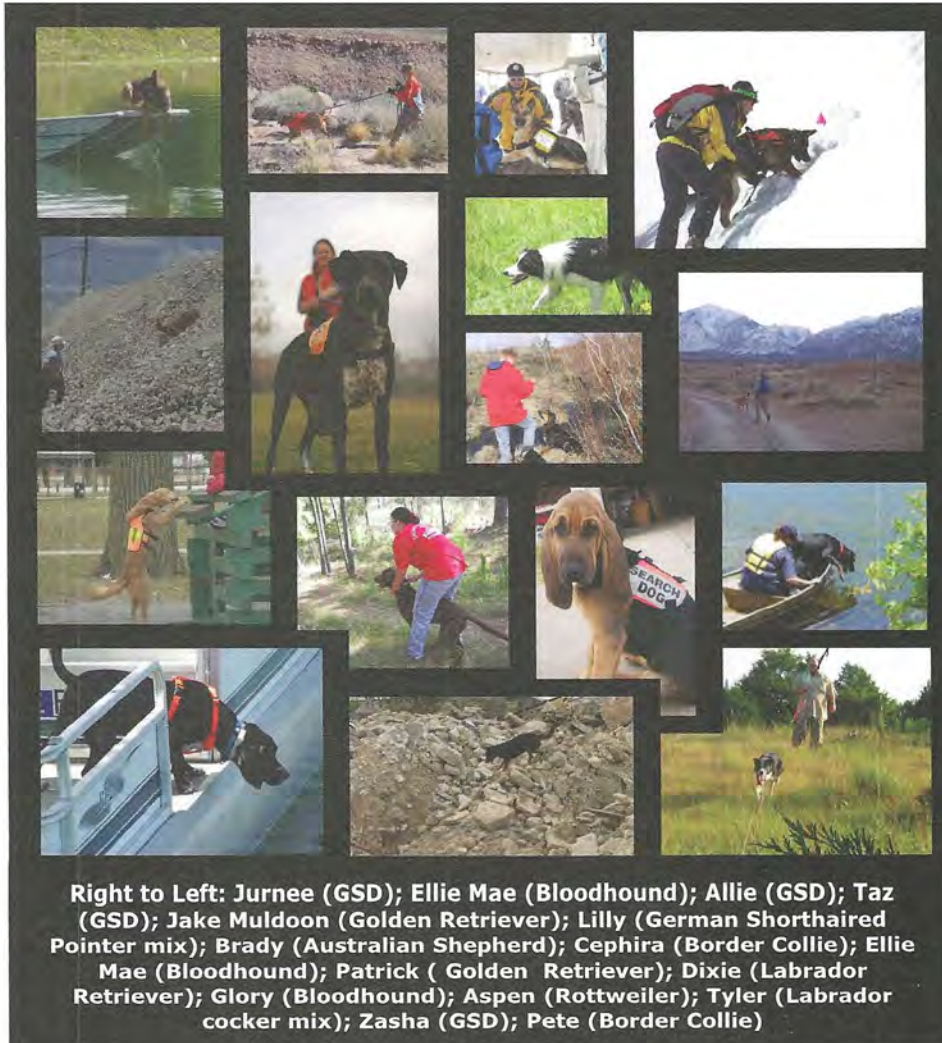
Longitudinal study: research involving repeated observations of the same endpoints taken over intervals moving forward in time. In this context, the puppies tested at a young age would then be followed into adulthood and reassessed to determine if the original behavioral assessments held true as the dog aged and reached adulthood, and to determine if the dog was successful in certifying in the discipline for which he was selected and the evaluation was made.

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an unknown experience to a dog. To then assume that a puppy, put into this unfamiliar position, is exhibiting dominance by struggling is unrealistic. Perhaps the dog is struggling out of awareness of being placed into a seemingly unsafe situation.

Given the noticeable lack of research in the field of domestic canine behavior and development, most assessment techniques have been developed based on anecdotal observations, subjective impressions and personal experiences. Therefore, it is essential that these tests always be done under the guidance of trusted and experienced personnel.

It's a Demanding Job



Right to Left: Jurnee (GSD); Ellie Mae (Bloodhound); Allie (GSD); Taz (GSD); Jake Muldoon (Golden Retriever); Lilly (German Shorthaired Pointer mix); Brady (Australian Shepherd); Cephira (Border Collie); Ellie Mae (Bloodhound); Patrick (Golden Retriever); Dixie (Labrador Retriever); Glory (Bloodhound); Aspen (Rottweiler); Tyler (Labrador cocker mix); Zasha (GSD); Pete (Border Collie)

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The demands placed on every dog are unique to its function in life. Consider what is expected of a dog in each of the many jobs it might be asked to do: companion, therapy, obedience, agility, hunting, field trialing, herding, flyball, article tracking, dock diving, seeing-eye, assistance, law enforcement/patrol, bomb, narcotics, protection, earth-dog, Frisbee®, military patrol/tracking, etc. Even within the category of SAR itself, there are many sub-disciplines: avalanche, water recovery, area/air-scent, tracking/trailing, human remains, and disaster.

Within these sub-disciplines there may be even a finer partitioning of skills – disaster: live find or human remains; area: scent discriminatory or nondiscriminatory; tracking/trailing: human or article search; human remains: large sources, small sources, or archeology; etc. The point is the jobs dogs are capable of performing are many and each requires a unique set of skills and temperament. With this in mind, it should be clear that no single temperament test could possibly be ideal for evaluating a candidate for every SAR discipline. Many different evaluation processes exist in the literature and some trainers have developed their own personal tests. When you are considering using a particular temperament test, you need to keep in mind for which discipline the test was originally developed. We are not implying that tests developed for other disciplines cannot be used for evaluating SAR dogs. Quite the opposite, but we want to emphasize that you need to weigh the results of the various parts of the evaluation process and think carefully about what will be expected of a certified SAR dog in the discipline you plan to pursue.

If you are an experienced handler then you are familiar with the physical and emotional demands placed on a SAR dog. Critically consider each testing process and determine if it truly evaluates the skills required of our dogs. If you are a novice handler we strongly recommend that first, you spend a substantial amount of time observing working SAR dogs and determining what skills are vital to their success. Second, that you ask the advice and help of experienced handlers and trainers in your discipline when choosing your canine partner.

Familiarity with the Test and the Evaluator: When deciding which test to use, keep in mind that the characteristics valued in a SAR dog candidate can be very different from those of a household companion dog. For example, a dog with high drive and energy is a great resource in SAR, but rarely desired for the average house pet, particularly if you value your couch, garden hose or leather shoes in one piece.

Therefore, be certain that the test you are using both includes evaluation of SAR related drives and properly values these drives during interpretation of the test results. When using any test to determine a dog's temperament or other characteristics it is highly recommended that you bring along support in the form of someone experienced in temperament testing and familiar with the requirements and expectations of a working SAR dog. This ensures the tests are done properly, that everyone (including the dog) is safe and that interpretations are fair. In addition, it

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is very helpful to have a second set of eyes at the test. Also, for the novice handler asking a knowledgeable teammate to help them choose a canine partner can help forge a relationship with an experienced teammate. We also strongly recommend that you take detailed written notes and if possible, make a digital recording of the test for future review.



Hoss (Border Collie)



Coyote (GSD) trailing scarce human scent on hard surfaces.

The person testing the dog should not be bonded with the dog. Most dogs read us much better than we read them and if we are nervous or uneasy they will be likely to reflect these emotions. Additionally, if during the testing process the dog is only interacting with familiar people, we will not be able to successfully evaluate their reaction to new people. A dog's reaction to strangers is a critical evaluation factor for a potential SAR dog.

Coping Skills: While some parts of these tests deliberately place a dog into unfamiliar situations, dogs should never be placed under such stress that they do not exhibit their normal character. Except for specific parts, the dog should be at ease during the evaluation process. We all know from personal experience that tension does little to enhance one's job performance. Reaching a state of panic or defense mode can override one's ability to make wise decisions. While we want

to measure a dog's comfort level under unusual circumstances, we must always remember that given proper socialization, unfamiliar situations can become common occurrences to dogs, resulting in no adverse reaction. Therefore, what we are actually

Scientific Study: Hare et al. (2002) describes how domestic dogs have developed an innate responsiveness to human directional cueing. The capacity of puppies of 9 weeks of age or older to respond to human pointing or gazing, in order to find objects or food, does not appear to be a learned response. The response in domestic dogs is superior to that of wolves or even chimpanzees. It appears that canine cognitive abilities have converged with humans to make social bonding and cooperation possible, even without the conscious effort of training by humans.

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interested in testing is the dog's ability to cope with and overcome mild fear provoking experiences. Short term suspicion or fear caused by an unfamiliar object initially perceived as a threat, is very different from enduring, nonspecific hostility or timidity. Reactive behaviors by a dog need to be interpreted correctly in the context of the testing procedure.

DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS IN A SAR DOG

FRIENDLINESS - Well-socialized, personable, outgoing, trustworthy around the public and other animals (Pack drive).

FOCUS - Ability to ignore distractions encountered while searching and concentrate amid chaos.

INTENSITY - Strong desire to play with and retrieve a toy (Play drive) and/or obtain food (Food drive) and the determination not to stop until the toy or food is found (Hunt drive).

FORTITUDE - Resolve to remain focused on the task at hand despite physical and mental discomforts.

CONFIDENCE - Not shy or fearful of loud or sudden noises, different surfaces, new situations, or other sensory stimuli.

STAMINA - Ability to work long grueling shifts under disagreeable conditions.

TRAINABILITY - Responsive to control by their handlers for recalls, directionals, general obedience, etc. (Pack drive).

SELF-CONTROL - The ability to contain the drive to chase critters or to roll in a cow pie in a pasture while searching for humans.

UNDESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS IN A SAR DOG

FEARFULNESS - Lack of nerve strength and hesitant or cowardly towards new situations or sensory stimuli.

INDIFFERENCE - Lacks motivation, focus, and intensity.

AGGRESSION OR REACTIVITY - Unpredictable or outwardly hostile behavior towards people or other animals.

What's in a Test

To be meaningful, a temperament test must be both consistent and valid. To be consistent, it must give similar results regardless of who administers it or how many

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times it is given. This does not mean that any person off the street can give a temperament test and expect the same result as a seasoned tester. This means that different seasoned testers should come to similar conclusions about the dog when using the same testing procedures. Objective style tests with observable behaviors, such as “tail wagging”, are inherently more reliable than subjective tests with measures, such as “the dog looks happy.” This is because the interpretations of subjective measurements are highly influenced by the unintentional biases of the individual giving the test. We all have these biases based on our life experiences. That said, an experienced trainer can bring a lot to the table by incorporating their subjective observations (based on years of interacting with a variety of dogs) into the final interpretation of the test results.



**Madison
(Bloodhound)**

Good candidates for SAR dogs can also be found with breed rescue organizations and at animal shelters. **Madison**, a 4 year old Bloodhound that was adopted from a Texas Bloodhound rescue organization, started training in December of 2004. Madison displayed good-natured behavior with other animals and loved children. Her attitude was that everyone was a friend and no one was a stranger. She was highly motivated to work and loved her job. She approached training distractions with curiosity and self-confidence, and soon continued with her task. Throughout

her training, she displayed the self-motivation to learn and retained that desire into her mission-ready capacity.

On April 24, 2008 the Hudson Fire Department K9 SAR team received a call requesting assistance for a lost 3 year old male in Angelina County, Texas. This area of Texas is heavily wooded and has thick underbrush and vines. The child had been missing approximately 3 hours when the SAR team arrived at the location. Madison was given the child's tennis shoe as a scent article, she proceeded to trail to the edge of the wooded area near the home and then into the woods. Some of the areas where Madison trailed required the handler to crawl through the heavy underbrush and vines. Within 15 minutes of beginning her trail Madison had located the child, who was safely returned to his family.

To be valid, a temperament test must accurately measure the drive or behavior being evaluated. For example, throwing a toy for the dog to chase and retrieve would be a fair way to partially test prey drive, but would tell you nothing about food drive.

A good use of temperament tests for puppies is to rule out poor candidates rather than to rely on a single test to select the perfect SAR dog. The reality of training a SAR

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dog is very different from that portrayed in the media. The superficial coverage of canine SAR and the breeds utilized can easily bias a novice handler's understanding of the demands placed on SAR dogs and the associated physical and intellectual strength required.



Sekou (Golden Retriever)
locating human scent below the
water's surface.

Many breeds historically used as search dogs have become popular with the public. As a result, these breeds are bred for many other tasks, such as conformation, therapy, and personal companions. It is important to recognize that dogs bred for these purposes require very different temperaments and rarely have the drive intensity or physical stamina needed to be a good SAR dog.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS BY DISCIPLINE:

TRAILING:

Obsessive about ground scent – these dogs usually have their noses to the ground, even when not searching (for us). Independent and determined to keep on trail even when given misdirection by their handler. Perseverance to keep searching in low or difficult scenting conditions.

AREA / AIR-SCENT:

Agile, sure-footed and athletic. Stamina to cover large areas in rugged terrain. Focused on search subject while ignoring wildlife and other distractions.

AVALANCHE:

Tolerant of unsure footing in shifting snow. Tolerant of adverse weather conditions.

HUMAN REMAINS DETECTION (HRD):

No aversion to cadaver material.

FORENSIC / CRIME SCENE HRD:

Calm focus to methodically cover small areas in great detail.

DISASTER:

Focused and attentive around extreme distractions, such as sirens, large machinery, pounding, digging, crowds, smoke. Agile, sure-footed and athletic. Confident and steady on unstable and texturally unpleasant surfaces. Ability to negotiate large obstacles. Stamina to cover large areas in rugged terrain.

WATER:

Disciplined in a boat. Tolerant of shifting footing and constant motion.

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Scientific Studies: In a study by Wilsson and Sundgren (1998a), conducted on 1235 GSD puppies, it was concluded that behavior tests for 8-week old puppies don't accurately predict future behavior. At this age, behavior changes rapidly and makes correlation to adult behavior less reliable. A review of scientific literature was conducted by Jones and Gosling (2005) and determined that validation of puppy behavior tests is lacking. However, the research supported the viability of assessing canine temperament through testing.

Slabbert and Odendaal (1999) found that the combination of testing retrieve drive at 8 weeks and aggression at 6 and 9 months was an effective predictor for police dog candidates; predicting 91.7% of successful and 81.7% of unsuccessful candidates. This test was designed specifically to select the characteristics valued in police service dogs and demonstrates that carefully considered combinations of evaluations at different maturation stages can be helpful in the selection process.

In several studies, heritability had a high correspondence to adult behavior (Wilsson and Sundgren, 1998a, 1997b; Ruefenacht et al., 2002). In 25 years of administering a standardized field behavior test on 3497 GSD, Ruefenacht et al. (2002) found the highest genetic correlation between *self-confidence* and *nerve-stability* amongst the seven characteristics measured. It should be noted that the sample of dogs tested represented about 10% of the annual birth and the majority of the dogs were trained by experienced dog handlers. However, factors such as the inevitable wide variety of evaluators administering the test, of experiences and training given the dog, and of owners who kept the dogs, added unpredictable influences on the results.

Temperament evaluations can help the handler sort through a horde of puppies, rule out those with a temperament better suited for other tasks, and choose one that displays the most potential to become a SAR dog. However, remember that a dog chosen by such tests offers no guarantee of eventual certification. Such evaluations function primarily to improve the likelihood that, given proper training and motivation, you can mold the chosen dog into a quality SAR partner.

Testing Factors to Consider

INSIDER KNOWLEDGE: Always ask a breeder or person familiar with the puppies for their insight into the puppies' personalities. They should have spent a lot of time

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observing and interacting with the puppies and this puts them in a unique position to give comments. If a dog is with a foster home or at a shelter, the family or shelter personnel should have important knowledge about the dog's personality, and how it interacts with adults, children and other animals.

Many high-energy dogs that are difficult for rescue organizations to place are very suitable for SAR work. So, talk at length to those who have been interacting with the dog on a regular basis.

Scientific Study: Serpell and Hsu (2001) evaluated the usefulness of a puppy raisers' questionnaire method for assessing behavior and temperament in 1067, one-year-old guide dogs. Breeds included Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, German Shepherd dog, and Lab x Golden crosses. The questionnaire encompassed 12 items on aggression, 8 items on fear and anxiety, 8 items on training and obedience, 4 items on attachment and separation distress and 8 items on general behavior. The dogs were evaluated by their volunteer puppy-raisers at 6 and 12 months. The results confirmed the usefulness of using a questionnaire format for evaluating behavior. This demonstrates the wealth of information that individuals who interact on a regular basis with the dog have to impart on behavioral assessments, if asked appropriate questions.



Pete (Border Collie) finding human remains scented up in the trees.

HEALTH: A dog will react far differently when sick or wounded than when it is healthy. Not all sickness is immediately apparent. Look closely at the dog and be sure it appears healthy, has a normal temperature, breathing rate and gum color bright, clear eyes; and an age-appropriate level of energy. As mentioned above, talking with those who interact on a daily basis with

the dog or puppy will help you to determine if a dog is sluggish or reacting abnormally. This might indicate an underlying infection or condition, which could negatively affect the evaluation procedure. Be sure not to test a puppy after an intensive "play time" or the puppy may test as having low drive, when it is actually only tired from romping with

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its littermates. It is also not recommended to test a puppy just after it has eaten. Like us, a good nap after lunch is often all that a puppy desires.

AGE: The age of the dog has an impact on the test outcome. A dog's behavior changes over time and puppy tests are less reliable than tests on adult dogs since environmental pressures strongly affect a puppy as it matures. A dog doesn't reach physical maturity until about the age of two. If possible, test a very young puppy on more than one occasion. During the first weeks of development, the puppies are investigating their own abilities and status within



Jake (Flat-coated Retriever) taking human scent off a vehicle surface.

Scientific Study: Wilsson and Sundgren (1998b) measured the effects of weight on puppy behavior using 867 German Shepherd puppies. They concluded that puppy weight, which corresponded to the degree of maturation of the puppy, greatly affected behavior.

the pack, thus their test results may differ from week to week. Use a test specifically designed for the age of the dog to be tested and don't rely too heavily on any test done on a dog of less than a year old.

STRESS: Fear and anxiety (such as that felt by a dog in a shelter or a puppy removed from his mother for the first time) would negatively impact a test. Dogs in a shelter or

Shelter dogs experience many stressors, such as high noise levels, high activity levels outside the kennel, constant exposure (no quiet place removed from sight), lots of visitor/stranger interaction, unusual environment, kenneled with new roommates, new food, and a multitude of other dogs and cats in the vicinity. In addition, they may have been found injured or starved.

rescue situation often do not display their normal temperament until they have been in a safe and stable environment for several days. A dog in a shelter or rescue facility should be tested only after he has been in that location for at least three to four

days. Recent arrivals to such a facility will not test true to character, as they are often unsure and anxious about their new situation.

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SENSORY STAGES: Puppies do not emerge into the world as wholly developed, fully functional miniature versions of an adult dog. Like all mammals, development of many physiological systems and sensory organs continues well into adolescence (Dehasse, 1994). A primary system which requires further development is the brain and nervous system (Fox, 1974). Both training techniques and evaluations, such as temperament testing, must consider these factors. For example, reflexes and coordination, keen eyesight and hearing, and muscle tone are all still developing during puppyhood.

SOCIAL SKILLS: As discussed above, puppies continue to develop after birth. This includes their social interactions. Puppies are not automatically programmed to interact with other species; they require socialization. In the hands of experienced



Sarge (Belgian Malinois) working human remains scent in thick brush.

breeders and foster families, puppies can be exposed to a rich environment during their first few weeks of life to help them on their way to proper social skills.

All dogs go through different phases of development on their way to becoming adults. One phase of particular interest is a so-called "fear stage". We will discuss this more in the chapter on Fear and Anxiety, however, for now just know that during these stages a dog may have

heightened sensitivity to common daily experiences. During these stages, small, seemingly harmless events can be interpreted as scary by the dog and negatively affect their future view of the world. It is important to be sensitive of these stages and avoid inadvertent trauma to the dog during these developmental times.

Most temperament tests purposely put a controlled amount of pressure on the dog.



Sandy (GSD) pinpointing human scent beneath the snow.

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One has to be conscious of younger dogs and avoid undue pressure, as well as misinterpretation of resulting behaviors during these fear stages. One such common test is the startle test to determine a puppy's fearfulness. This test should be done with caution on a puppy. The set-up should be handled with care, ensuring that the puppy is relaxed and comfortable in an open space where it can escape and return to investigate the stimulus. Don't mistakenly discount a dog as unsuitable for SAR work, when in fact, it is just in a fear stage. Given proper training, encouragement and socialization the dog will easily work through its fears and be a proficient SAR dog.

BREED: Bloodhounds and Border Collies make equally good SAR dogs but behave very differently because of their breed. They can also be expected to show different results on temperament tests. When interpreting test results, always consider breed characteristics. For example, some breeds are very interested in interacting with humans while others are more detached; some breeds are naturally more reserved while others are more outwardly exuberant; some breeds are more likely to give eye contact than others. These are just a few examples of the differences that may affect test results. Familiarity with breed characteristics should influence your interpretation of test results.

PASS/FAIL TESTS:

Evaluations should not give a pass or fail outcome. They should only measure the quality and quantity of the characteristic being assessed. For example, a range of sociability behaviors might be: approaches with tail wagging and actively sniffs

the tester's feet, approaches with tail wagging and stays back a step or two, approaches to within a few feet with tail down and no aggression, does not approach, or approaches aggressively. Tests that measure a range of behaviors allow you to judge the intensity needed of the desired characteristic. Ultimately it is the job that the dog is expected to perform that will dictate the quality and quantity of the drives wanted in that dog.

Scientific Study: In a study of 1310 GSD and 797 Labrador Retrievers ranging from 14 to 20 months of age, marked differences were found between the breeds (Wilsson and Sundgren, 1997a). GSD scored higher for sharpness (the tendency to react with aggression) and defense drive (the tendency to defend itself or its handler), while Labradors scored higher in categories, such as courage (ability to overcome fear) and hardness (lack of a lasting effect of an unpleasant or frightening experience). It should be noted however, that these tests were conducted by one person and scored in a subjective manner. Despite these drawbacks, it does demonstrate differences between breed reactions to temperament testing. Therefore, you should consider how a test is conducted and if it fairly assesses the breed being evaluated given the predispositions of breed temperaments.

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EXPERTISE of the EVALUATOR: If the person evaluating the dog is an experienced evaluator, he or she will be aware of the limitations and ambiguous nature of particular testing scenarios. As with any testing situation, clear-cut conclusions are not always possible. Results of some components can be inconclusive and tests should be conducted with any procedural shortcomings in mind. The expertise and experience of the evaluator will help to clarify what these uncertain results may mean in the context of the outcome of all of the components of the test.

SHARING THE EVENT: When evaluating a puppy, bring along a second set of eyes; preferably someone who is experienced in selecting and training SAR dogs. Be sure you discuss your priorities and test interpretations with them. You will want to have an independent observer rating the dog at the same time to see if their observations match yours and to catch details you might overlook.

WRITTEN PROCEDURES: Always follow written testing procedures and directions so you don't invalidate the results or affect comparisons if you are able to repeat the evaluation at a later date.

AGGRESSION: Threatening the dog and/or handler during a test is not recommended. Breeds bred for protection work (such as German Shepherds, Doberman Pinschers, and Rottweilers) unsurprisingly, may show defensive reactions as their nature and breeding dictate. Other breeds (such as Border Collies, Golden Retrievers, and Bloodhounds) may become frightened when challenged in a threatening manner. There are valid methods that test for reactive tendencies that are more useful and less potentially harmful for the dog. Threatening a dog may have long term, undesirable and detrimental consequences on the dog's behavior. Puppies, in particular, are very impressionable and will remember "scary" situations well into adulthood to the point where it could negatively affect their later responses to similar circumstances.

LOCATION: The testing environment can have an impact on the test outcome; for example, testing in a veterinary clinic versus a local, open-space park. Many dogs equate veterinary clinics with evil things, such as needle pokes, beeps in the ears, and rectal thermometers. Dogs in such an environment may display atypical behaviors. On the other hand, giving the test in a dog's own backyard is also not a good choice. We all have said the words "my dog doesn't do that at home!" Dogs in familiar territory may not display underlying fearful tendencies if they have them. Choose a neutral, unfamiliar location to perform a temperament evaluation.

DISTRACTIONS: Throughout this discussion we have mentioned many possible obstacles to a successful evaluation, both environmental and physical. But you must also consider the obvious distractions. When at the shelter or a breeder's house the test should be moved away from kennels and other dogs. If at the park, the test

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should be moved away from crowds of people, children and dogs, baseballs being thrown, or soccer balls being kicked. It should not be done next to a construction site or a highway with lots of noise and movement. It should not be done in a field with an abundance of rabbits, birds or squirrels to watch. It should not be done in a small confined space where a dog may feel cornered or towered over. Choose a relatively quiet, open area with few other people or other animals and a minimum of noise. You want the dog to be able to focus on you and the tasks he is being asked to perform.

THE FUTURE JOB DESCRIPTION:

While you may want to test for a broad range of abilities, be sure to weigh the results appropriately for the job. Testing the agility of a bloodhound in

a collapsed structure adds little to gauging the dog's ability to trail in a wilderness setting. Conversely, a dog destined for a future in human remains detection cannot show aversion to cadaver material and a future disaster dog must be agile over rubble and lack sensitivity to the loud, distracting noises of heavy equipment.

The bottom line is to always keep in mind for which SAR job you are choosing the dog and be sure to specifically test the parameters that are important to that discipline. If a dog's destiny has yet to be decided, then it is very beneficial to assess a broad range of abilities to determine the candidate's natural inclinations. Then direct the dog and handler into the discipline best suited to the dog's natural talents. Within reason of course - there is little call for an avalanche dog in Louisiana!



Rainbow (Golden Retriever Mix)



Training the long down with handlers out of sight.

TEMPERAMENT EVALUATIONS

OBEDIENCE and AGILITY: Some temperament tests are heavy on obedience commands, such as sit and down. Again, the job the SAR dog is expected to do will determine if this test is suitable. A dog that will be worked off-lead has to come immediately when commanded to avoid dangerous situations. However, testing for or teaching a trailing dog to heel is considered inappropriate by some handlers. Do keep in mind that temperament tests or instinct certifications are usually not enough and that Canine Good Citizen certifications or higher are often required of dogs on SAR teams. Puppy kindergarten is highly recommended for socialization purposes and basic obedience classes will teach the dogs the self-control needed to function in today's society. Disobedient dogs do not make a good impression on the public or law enforcement.

In some disciplines, such as disaster, it is particularly important that a dog be agile and at ease on unfamiliar, unstable, or unpleasant surfaces.

A dog's initial comfort level on such obstacles can be assessed during temperament tests. Agility training also helps to build confidence and nerve strength in SAR dogs.



**SAR agility emphasizes control and confidence, not speed.
Timber (GSD)**

Available Temperament Tests

The following is a list of some temperament tests that contain parts that may be useful when evaluating a SAR dog. Each test is summarized in the following format:

SOURCE: where the evaluation is described (book, url, or other).

FOCUS: purpose of test or discipline to which it is directed (e.g. puppy, disaster, adult).

CATEGORIES: major drives/characteristics/categories evaluated by the test.

AGE: age(s) of the dog at which this test can be applied.

USES: summary of the uses for this test.

Young Puppy Temperament Assessment

SOURCE: http://www.paw-rescue.org/PAW/PETTIPS/DogTip_Temperament.php

FOCUS: The primary focus appears to be gauging independence and dominance.

CATEGORIES: Sociability, independence, dominance, noise nervousness

AGE: Puppies- Any age during puppyhood.

USES: These tests are in a website dealing with adopting shelter dogs but can be used for any puppy.

TEMPERAMENT EVALUATIONS

American Temperament Test Society (ATTS)

SOURCE: <http://www.atts.org/>

FOCUS: Focuses on different aspects of temperament such as stability, shyness, aggressiveness, friendliness, as well as protectiveness towards its handler and/or self-preservation in the face of a perceived threat. Aids in determining aggressiveness.

AGE: 18 months or older.

CATEGORIES: Test for sociability, investigative behavior; recovery response to sudden noise; reaction to visual stimulus; unusual footing (reaction and recovery time); protective instinct; and alertness to unusual situations.

USES: This test simulates a walk through a neighborhood where everyday situations are encountered. During this walk, the dog experiences visual, auditory and tactile stimuli. Neutral, friendly and threatening situations are encountered where the dog must distinguish between threatening and non-threatening situations. A dog showing unprovoked aggression, panic without recovery or strong avoidance will not pass. This test would be useful in determining the non-aggressive stability of the dog.

Scientific Working Group on Dog & Orthogonal Detector Guidelines (SWGDOG)

SOURCE: <http://www.swgdog.org/>

FOCUS: Detection dog testing.

CATEGORIES: Evaluations described for environmental soundness, search and retrieve/food drive, tracking, and sociability. A detailed description of the physical examination, that should be done before selecting a dog, is included.

AGE: 12 to 36 months.

USES: Evaluates the environmental soundness, search and retrieve/food drive, and sociability to select a SAR dog in several disciplines. The tracking evaluation is specific to tracking and trailing dogs.

PAWS Working Dog Evaluation (PAWS Test)

SOURCE : <http://www.malnut.com/ref/write/paws>

FOCUS: Focuses on Possessiveness, Attention, Willingness and Strength.

CATEGORIES: The test is divided into seven areas and is adjusted according to the age of the puppy. Test for prey drive, retrieve, persistence, tug, possessiveness, recall and attention.

AGE: Puppies and adults.

USES: Developed to identify and evaluate the main components of working temperaments for scent detection, SAR, French ring, Schutzhund, agility, obedience, and similar activities. A dog's possessiveness, drive to train, attention and willingness to work are evaluated. Evaluations are measured in terms of "Excellent, OK, or Indifferent" and the weight of the elements is adjusted depending on the job the dog is being selected to perform.

TEMPERAMENT EVALUATIONS

Brownell-Marsolais-Hawn

SOURCE :

http://www.disasterdog.org/forms/training/brownell_marsolais_hawn_scale_sept2000.pdf

<http://www.avalanche.org/~doghouse/SELECTINGDog/SelectOlderDog/CanineScreening.htm>

FOCUS: Disaster dog testing

CATEGORIES: Inherent ability: sociability toward people and toward other canines; Motivation and drive: commitment to reward (toy), play drive, prey drive, hunt drive and handler / canine interaction; Nerve strength: Sensitivity to slick, unstable and rough surfaces, to being elevated, to a confined space, to aural and visual stimuli.

AGE: At least 18 months

USES: Primarily used for initial selection of a presumptive disaster dog. However, many components are useful for testing a dog for other SAR disciplines.

Volhard Puppy Aptitude Test (PAT Test)

SOURCE: <http://www.volhard.com/puppy/pat.htm> or

http://workingdogs.com/testing_volhard.htm

Detailed information regarding how the test should be administered and test forms can be found in Volhard J and Volhard W. Dog Training for Dummies, IDG Books, 2001.

FOCUS: General puppy evaluation. Not discipline or breed specific.

CATEGORIES: Social attraction, confidence, dependence or independence, degree of dominate or submissive tendency, willing to work with a human, sensitivity to touch, sound, response to strange objects and structural soundness.

AGE: It is suggested that puppies be tested at 49 days.

USES: Evaluates pack drive, fight or flight and prey drive. Based on a scoring of range of 1–6, a puppy's tendency for aggression, dominance, submissiveness, independence, sensitivity and stability is rated.

Nova Scotia German Shepherd Dog Club (NSGSDC)

SOURCE : <http://www.nsgsdc.com/temperament.shtml>

FOCUS: General temperament test for the German Shepherd Dog (CKC)

CATEGORIES: Behavior toward strangers (neutral stranger, friendly stranger, crowd); reaction to acoustic stimuli (hidden clattering, gun test); reaction to a visual stimulus; reaction to unusual footing; self-protective/aggression reaction.

AGE: Must be 12 months.

USES: To judge the dog's natural responses to each situation. It is OK for the dog to be startled or to show aggression. Each dog is judged separately with consideration being given to the Canadian Kennel Club's temperament for that particular breed. Any dog, over 12 months of age; they do not have to be pure bred. Each dog must be taken through the course on lead. The handler is permitted to encourage the dogs, but cannot use obedience commands.

TEMPERAMENT EVALUATIONS

Lindsay - Puppy Behavior Profile

SOURCE: Lindsay SR. *Handbook of Applied Dog Behavior and Training*, vol. 3.

FOCUS: General puppy testing

CATEGORIES: Social attraction, contact tolerance, physical controls, impulse control, ball play, rag play, separation reaction, reactivity and problem solving, startle reflex, cognition.

AGE: Puppy

USES: Objective assessment tool of social, cognitive, emotional and motivational dimensions in puppies; primarily used by behaviorists.

Search Dog Foundation

SOURCE : <http://www.searchdogfoundation.org>

FOCUS: Characteristics desired in a disaster dog.

CATEGORIES: Prey drive, play drive, sociability.

AGE: 9 to 18 months.

USES: Used to determine a well-socialized, personable and outgoing dog with high play, high hunt drive and the confidence and courage to remain focused amidst overwhelming distraction, noise and unstable surfaces.

Take Home Points to Remember

- **The evaluation is only an indication of behavioral inclinations; environmental factors and training can and will influence a dog's eventual behavior and abilities.**
- **NEVER frighten or hurt a puppy or dog during the evaluation process. Testing should be a happy, comfortable situation for both the dog and the tester.**
- **The dog or puppy being evaluated should not be bonded to the tester.**
- **Temperament tests may have different outcomes based on the age of the dog. A dog's behavior changes over time, particularly prior to reaching maturity.**
- **Evaluation results from a single testing event are not usually conclusive. It is simply a measure of the dog on that particular day. We all have good and bad days. It is recommended that you temperament test a dog on more than one occasion to get true insight into the dog's typical demeanor.**

More Take Home Points to Remember

- **Keep in mind you are selecting a dog to work as a partner with you. Select a breed and temperament to match your training abilities and lifestyle.**
- **Remember your job and that of your partner is to save lives; choose a dog you would want searching for you if you became lost. In other words, select only the best candidate and don't settle for anything less!**

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DISASTER (LIVE & HRD)



Scout (Labrador Retriever)

Chapter 3 CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH

Confidence and nerve strength are two qualities essential to a SAR dog's temperament. Bumping into the "unexpected" is commonplace while participating in a search. A canine search team will encounter helicopters, boats, and ATVs to transport a dog and handler when necessary. They will be asked to interact with crowds, and people in every state of emotion from sad and stressed, disoriented and angry, to exuberant and animated. They may hear machinery, thunder, and a multitude of other loud or strange noises. They must traverse unstable, narrow footing and handle stepping on a multitude of surface types. They should be able to navigate steep angled terrain, deep mud and snow. They may be required to cope with darkness, bright lights, jack-hammering in the street, airport settings, crawling through drainage pipes or over debris, and free-roaming dogs investigating what's happening. The variety of new and strange circumstances in which a canine may find themselves are vast. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that your partner be able to physically and emotionally handle entirely novel situations and unusual stimuli yet still remain stable, unfazed and able to concentrate on his job. Without these qualities, the dog will be an unreliable partner; inconsistently searching, unpredictably losing focus or even refusing to work when encountering an extremely uncomfortable situation.

Confidence : Definitions and Testing

Resilience is a word often used to describe the attitude of buoyancy and self-assurance necessary to be a SAR dog. It means that the dog is able to cope with something it hasn't previously seen. This does not mean that a dog should rush headlong into any unfamiliar situation.



Beau (Labrador Retriever)

A dog can be cautious or temporarily diverted from his task when encountering something new and unexpected, but the dog must quickly recover and return to his search duties. Confidence is defined by the Scientific Working Group called, SWGDOG, (2007) as: "When a dog is conditioned to know when it can act on its

CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH

abilities. An environmentally conditioned acceptance of safety." While some believe confidence is inherent in a dog, this definition indicates that confidence is a learned ability; the truth lies somewhere in between. A dog may inherit a level of self-confidence from his breeding and parentage, but how he's treated and trained also has a large impact on his confidence level. Lindsay (2001) states that a dog "naturally acquires an enhanced sense of competency and confidence". He discusses at length how, as a result of previous experiences, a dog can learn that he can cope with and control what was at first viewed as a threatening situation.

Although not generally specified as a specific test item on temperament tests, the evaluation of confidence is a fundamental part of most any test. A dog will be put into an unfamiliar situation and the evaluator will observe on the dog's reactions and mannerisms while he is experiencing the event. These observations will describe the dog's confidence level and his ability to cope with unexpected events. "The dog approaches confidently with tail and ears held high." "The dog is at first startled, but soon inquisitively explores the source of the noise." "The dog cowers or cringes when an umbrella is suddenly opened nearby." "The dog trembles or whines when on unstable footing." "The dog hides behind his owner when he feels he can't cope." The Volhards' Canine Personality Profile (Volhard and Volhard, 2001) is an example of a test including such observations.

Nerve Strength : Definitions and Testing

Nerve strength is a term often associated with disaster dogs. However, it is important to all canine SAR disciplines. The Brownell-Marsolais-Hawn test (Brownell and Marsolais, 2000; Brownell et al., 2001) is commonly used by canine disaster teams and includes an evaluation of nerve strength. Wilderness search teams can also use the Brownell-Marsolais Scale to evaluate potential SAR dogs. According to Brownell et al. (2000), nerve strength is the ability of the dog to adapt to and cope with stressful stimuli in a working environment. In other words, a dog with good nerve strength has emotional stability in uncomfortable and unfamiliar environments. This stability is essential to helping the dog continue and complete a mission or training exercise. Once again, nerve strength is a combination of nature (breeding and heredity) and nurture (exposure and training in multiple situations and environments). In this test, nerve strength is evaluated by observing a dog's ability to cope in specific situations.

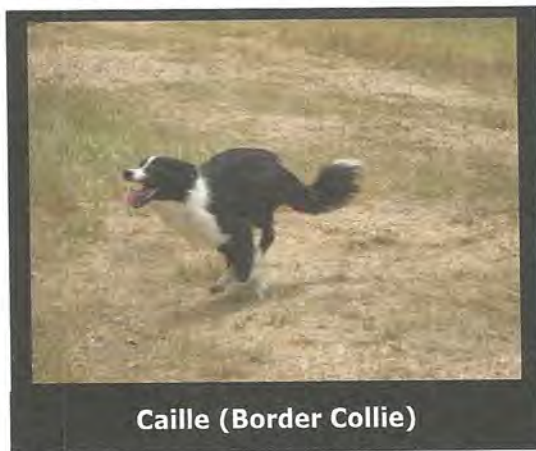
Surface sensitivity is tested using slick, unstable, and rough surfaces. Height sensitivity is tested by having the dog walk an elevated plank. Sensitivity to confined space is tested using a lighted confined space and then one that is dark. Sound sensitivity is tested with machinery noise, pounding and rattling. Gunfire and moving machinery are additional, optional tests for sound sensitivity. A dog can also be tested for his ability to work in a smoke-filled environment (optional). This test is done with adult dogs (at least 18 months of age) that have a close bond with their handlers.

CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH



Puppies and Adults

From these descriptions, you can see that confidence and nerve strength are intimately intertwined and difficult to separate. If you're choosing a puppy, there are several temperament tests described in Chapter 2 that can help you assess confidence and basic nerve strength. But remember, you are testing a puppy, a baby. You can't expect a very young dog to react with the courage he may show later, after bonding with his handler and being properly socialized and exposed to various environments.



A canine SAR candidate's training can be designed to help build and maintain these desirable characteristics. Training with distractions and training in new situations and facilities both builds confidence in the dog, and fosters nerve strength. There is a wide range of sights and sounds to expose a dog to in a positive way in a training environment (be inventive!). Always be aware of how a dog reacts to any unfamiliar environment. When sensitivity is observed, help your

dog to understand it. Through a reward system, you can teach him that this unfamiliar sight, sound or sensation is nothing to fear and that encountering it can be a very positive experience.

CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH

Scientific Studies: Environment influences behavior, stress and confidence. Lefebvre et al. (2007) studied the influence of housing on performance and dog-handler relationships of military dog teams. They determined that enhanced sociability and dog-handler relationships correlated strongly to dogs housed at home with their handler versus being housed away from their handlers in military kennels. Obedience performance was also improved. In addition to taking the military dog home, the off duty practicing of sport (such as: agility, biathlon, ring, obedience, etc.) enhanced the dogs' welfare by lowering the incidence of behaviors such as pacing, barking, destroying materials, diarrhea, tail chasing, howling, licking; increasing obedience performance; and decreasing the incidence of bites. Suspicion of previous rough handling of the dog was associated with impaired obedience and fearful or aggressive behavior. Lefebvre et al. also suggested that kennel confinement of military working dogs produces prolonged behavioral disorders along with activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis is a major part of the neuroendocrine system that controls a body's reactions to stress. Overall, they concluded that **time spent with dogs and housing at home with the handler enhanced that dog's welfare, sociability and obedience without concurrent deficit in working performance.**

Studies have also demonstrated that to be kenneled at a shelter is stressful on a dog (reviewed in: Tuber et al., 1999; Marston and Bennett, 2003). Kobelt et al. (2003), studied companion/pet dogs and determined that the amount of time the owner spent with their dog was negatively correlated with problematic behaviors (digging, chewing, etc.). **In other words, the more time an owner spent with his dog, the fewer problem behaviors were displayed by the dog.** In addition, studies have shown that increased exercise for a dog results in reduced prevalence of dominance and possessive-type aggression (Jagoe and Serpell, 1996).

A working SAR dog should show controlled anxiety when introduced to the unexpected situation the first time; and after proper encouragement and reward, no anxiety when introduced the second or third time. The bottom line is that a SAR dog needs the courage and intensity to work through challenges in any unfamiliar environment. Beginning with a dog whose personality already comprises this characteristic is ideal.

CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH

Nerve strength in SAR work (as defined by Brownell-Marsolais-Hawn, 2000) refers to the ability of the dog to adapt to a variety of tactile, aural, visual and olfactory stimuli. Nerve strength is the result of genetics and breeding, as well as exposure and socialization to a variety of environments. It can be enhanced by exposing dogs to various stimuli in a supportive manner from a young age.

Tactile stimuli include various textural surfaces - slick, rough, uneven, hard, soft, thorny, wet; unstable surfaces, and confining obstacles - tunnels, crawl spaces. Aural stimuli include loud machinery, gunfire, banging, pounding and digging. Visual stimuli include collapsed structures, large trucks, machinery, smoke, fire, crowds. Olfactory stimuli include smoke, fumes (diesel, gas), cadaver material.

Building Confidence and Nerve Strength



Rubicon (Chesapeake Bay Retriever)

While some situations can be trained for, many are difficult to predict or even imagine until they happen to you or a colleague. Therefore, it is worthwhile to talk extensively with other handlers and ask what odd situations they and their canine partners have encountered. Then consciously train for every peculiar distraction. The more varied the distractions, the environment, and the situations the better to psychologically

CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH

equip your dog to ignore such distractions; the unusual becomes the expected and the ordinary.

Scientific Studies: from Fox MW. Superdogs or a brave new dog world. In: *Understanding Your Dog*. Bantam Books. New York. 1974.

Early Handling: In studies with beagles, Michael Fox determined that thirty minutes of stimulation given daily to puppies during their first five weeks of life produced positive physiological changes. Stimulation consisted of brief exposures to cold, cutaneous stimulation by stroking, stimulation of balance organs of the nervous system (the semicircular canals) by gently tilting and rotating the pup, and stimulation of the visual and auditory systems by electronic flashes and clicks. These manipulations resulted in changes in heart rate and adrenal glands similar to producing physiological stress. Extreme caution was necessary to avoid excessive stress and possible pathophysiological reactions, leading to adrenal exhaustion and increased susceptibility to disease. However, with proper gentle stimulation the handled pups were far more active and exploratory than non-handled littermates (over which they were invariably dominant). When presented with a learning test in which the pup was required to solve simple detour problems, the non-handled pups were extremely aroused, yelped and made many errors. The handled pups were calm, made few errors, solved the problems quicker, and exhibited little distress vocalization.

Socialization is the process of puppies becoming attached first to their mothers, then to their peers, then to outsiders. If dogs do not receive sufficient social contact between four and twelve weeks of age, they do not develop firm bonds and instead may grow aloof, distant and even antisocial. There are two extremes to consider; dogs must socialize with both humans and other dogs. If pups are taken from their littermates, only interact with humans, and are not allowed to play and socialize with other dogs, they often grow aggressive, excessively fearful or socially indifferent to other dogs. On the other hand, if dogs are taken from the litter too late (~4 months) and have had little prior social interaction with humans, they are often too dog-attached and do not develop close relationships with humans and are thus difficult to train.

Environmental Enrichment refers to pups being raised surrounded by all kinds of interesting objects, which they are free to investigate and manipulate. Puppies raised in such an environment seem to develop faster, are more inquisitive and likely more intelligent. Puppies raised for the first

CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH

Scientific Studies (con't.):

twelve weeks in a kennel prefer to stay there and not come out and explore. They are fearful of unfamiliar objects and choose to withdraw instead of explore. Fox concluded that, "A dog of superb genetic background can be ruined this way". He would be difficult to train and would require help to overcome phobias and irrational fears. In contrast, littermates who have had only a few minutes a day outside the kennel in stimulating environments during five to eight weeks of age, are very inquisitive and active by twelve weeks. They bound out of their kennel when the door is opened. Their self-confidence and inquisitive, problem-solving nature make training an easier, more enjoyable and successful process.

We discuss the process of puppy enrichment in more detail in Chapter 6.

Since confidence and nerve strength in a dog or puppy are products of both nature and nurture, you can enhance them through supportive training. Training with positive encouragement and reward around distractions and in new situations facilitates the building and maintaining of these attributes in a working dog.

* Tasks specified in nerve strength tests can be incorporated into play and practice times: walking on different surfaces, entering confined spaces, and walking near loud noises (once the dog has been conditioned to accept the noise). Any situation the dog might encounter as a SAR dog should be introduced in a non-threatening, positive way that will increase the dog's confidence so that he can safely work in similar conditions. Use your imagination and have fun with it.

Ellie Mae (Bloodhound)



- *
- Take a walk in the park. What a great opportunity to walk through a sprinkler, crawl through the tunnel on the playground equipment, jump up onto the platform, and go down the slide.
 - Take a hike in the woods. Run, jump onto a fallen tree, run, crawl under another tree, run some more, cross a creek through the water, cross another creek on a fallen log, run your little heart out! What a great day!
 - Walk past a construction site. Two items to take care of before getting

CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH

Karma (Doberman Pinscher)



too close to a construction site are to ensure the safety of both the handler and the dog, and to ensure that the dog has been conditioned to the loud noises. Sounds of jackhammers, bells from large equipment backing up, engine roars, and banging and sights of large equipment and strange-looking or half-finished buildings might appear scary at first, however, the

dog will quickly become acclimatized to them if exposed first at a distance in a nonchalant, nonthreatening manner.

- Walk past the **airport**; more loud noises and large equipment moving around. If you can gain permission from the airport authority, take a walk through the terminal and expose the dog to crowds of people, elevators, and slick surfaces.
- Visit a **school**. Crowds of running children, ringing bells, slick floors, and equipment on the playground are a potpourri of new experiences to encounter.
- Take the opportunity to walk your dog over any **small rubble/debris pile** at a building site.

First Pick: A handler was looking for a Bloodhound puppy and wanted to make sure it had good potential as a SAR candidate. She asked the breeder to put the litter in a room before she arrived. When she arrived, the door was opened, and the handler watched to see which puppy came out first. She noted which puppy was the most inquisitive, exploring her and other items in the room. She wadded up a piece of paper and threw it out for the litter to see which one chased it and was the most interested in it. After playing with the puppies for awhile, the handler ran away and called in a high excited voice, "puppy, puppy, puppy!" to see which one followed her. She then turned each puppy over on its back to see which one struggled, but then became calm. She examined the paws and put a little pressure on each one, watching to see if any of the pups were afraid.

The puppy that passed all of these tests was the one the handler chose. That puppy turned out to be very confident and showed strong nerve strength as an adult.

CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH

Scientific Study: Fuchs et al. (2005) demonstrated a significant association between training at an early age (the puppy and young dog stage), and nerve stability and self-confidence in German Shepherd Dogs; demonstrating the important influence of external factors on aspects of the dogs' behavior.

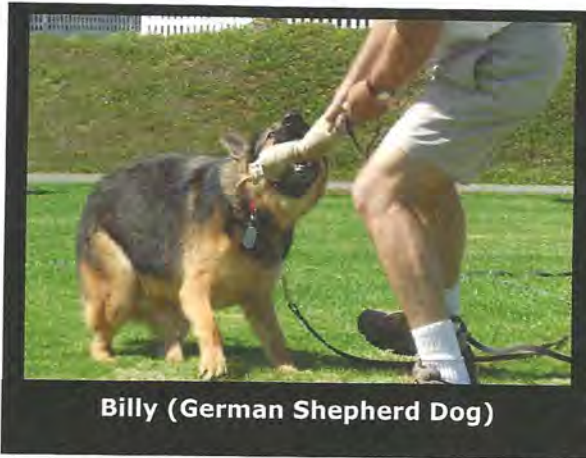
Behavior is neither a product of inheritance alone, nor of environmental influences; it is a consequence of the interaction between inherited capabilities (genotype) and environmental effects and experiences (Fox, 1974).

In closing, remember to pay close attention to a dog's general attitude during temperament testing and select a dog with these two extremely important qualities, confidence and nerve-strength. Then enhance these characteristics through carefully planned training exercises designed to demonstrate to the dog that new is not scary, it is simply different and can even be fun.

Scientific Studies: Haverbeke et al. (2008) surveyed 303 military canine handlers and conducted a standardized evaluation, including obedience and protection work, on 33 teams. They determined that a team's performance was influenced by the training method used. Lower performing dogs had received more adverse stimuli, such as pulling on the leash and hanging by the collar. In contrast, higher performing dogs received rewards, such as stroking and patting during their training.

Svartberg (2002) investigated animal personality and its relationship to performance in learning situations in a study of working dogs. The study was based on the analysis of five factors of shyness and boldness in 2655 German Shepherd Dogs and Belgian Tervurens between the ages of 12 and 18 months. The five factors were playfulness, sociability towards strangers, curiosity/fearfulness, interest to chase and aggressiveness. Results showed that high-performing dogs were consistently bolder and that this dimension predisposes trainability in general, demonstrated by the fact that these dogs scored higher in several different working abilities (tracking, searching, protection, obedience, etc.). **In short, there was a certain boldness threshold level required for success of dogs at working dog trials.** Bolder dogs reached higher levels and this threshold was independent of the dog's breed or sex.

CONFIDENCE and NERVE STRENGTH



(Photo courtesy of German Shepherd Rescue of Orange County, www.gsroc.org)

Take Home Points to Remember

- **Confidence and nerve strength are essential traits for a SAR dog.**
- **SAR dogs must have the resilience to cope with the unexpected and remain on task.**
- **Training and home environment influences a dog's behavior and confidence.**
- **Conscientious and well-planned training sessions in combination with proper socialization can build and sustain a dog's confidence and nerve strength.**

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**HUMAN REMAINS DETECTION
CADAVER / ARCHEOLOGICAL**



Hank (Black Mouth Cur)

Chapter 4 AGGRESSION and SOCIALIZATION

This chapter is provided as a guide for the SAR canine handler and is not intended as a manual for dealing with abnormally aggressive dogs. Most aggression or sociability issues can be dealt with in a safe and humane way. Some types of aggression can be lessened by spaying, neutering, or even medication. Please contact a behaviorist, a respected professional dog trainer, or veterinarian specializing in aggression issues for help.

Canine Aggressive Behaviors

Scientific Study: Borchelt (1983) collected data from 245 cases of aggressive behavior in companion dogs. He characterized eight major types of aggression: fear, dominance, possessiveness, protectiveness, predation, punishment, pain and intra-specific. Dominance and possessive aggression often occurred together, fear and intra-specific aggression usually occurred alone. The aggression issues occurred widespread across many breeds, pure and mixed.

All SAR dogs should be well socialized and adaptable to a wide variety of environments and situations, including being relaxed while working in new and unfamiliar areas/terrain, working closely with strangers, and working around loud noises and heavy machinery. SAR dogs often work with both dogs and people with whom they are unfamiliar. Because of this, a SAR dog (and handler) must behave in a calm manner at all times.

For SAR applications, aggression is defined as any behavior(s) that interferes with or prohibits the safe handling of the dog, the conducting of a search, or that puts any member of the public or search personnel (including other SAR dogs) at risk of injury.

Aggression is but one of many social behaviors dogs utilize to communicate information and assist them in gaining control over their environment or situation. They use it to defend themselves from a perceived threat, to compete over resources (such as food, territory, toys, and a mate), and to obtain food. Aggression is also referred to as "reactivity", because a dog is usually reacting to the set of circumstances into which it has been placed. Some aggression is natural in the dog world and some is inappropriate behavior due to improper socialization, hormonal imbalances or trained responses. The dog's prior socialization, training, temperament, and his environment play large roles in how reactive he will be under specific circumstances. In short, dogs use aggression as a means to obtain the things they want (or find pleasurable) and to escape from things they do not want (or find unpleasant).

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Many aggressive canine displays can result in dreadful noises, visually intense displays, and appearances of violent biting. However, the biting may in fact be minimal and done purposefully without maiming force in order to resolve the dispute with the least amount of harm (Donaldson, 2004). While to humans, these confrontations are distressing to watch, they often lead to resolution without physical damage. The two dogs part with their status established and no further conflict occurs. This does not imply that intervening with behavior modification should not be an option depending on the intensity. It just exemplifies that there are many different levels of aggression in the dog world and sometimes intervention is not required.

Scientific Studies: Daniels (1983a, 1983b) studied the social behavior of free-ranging urban dogs and determined that **“aggression was rare and mutual avoidance was the primary spacing mechanism”**. When aggressive interactions did occur it was much more likely to transpire between dogs who were unfamiliar with one another or arise when an estrous female was present.

In a study of the social behavior of free-ranging suburban dogs, Berman and Dunbar (1983) never observed antagonistic encounters nor signs of territoriality.

Actual combat is often preceded by a ritualized series of displays or signals. A dog has few defenses and a primary one is to bite. However, unless improperly conditioned, a dog will normally warn a potential challenger in an attempt to prevent an actual fight. To avoid a fight is to avoid the risk of injury and high cost in energy expenditure. Humans, in general, are poor at reading the body language of dogs and this preemptive attempt by the dog to avoid confrontation can be misinterpreted or even go unnoticed by us. The result can

be an unnecessary and totally avoidable escalation in aggression. Behaviors, such as growling and snapping, are undeniably obvious signals. Other behaviors may be more subtle and interpreted in different ways depending on the situation. Often a combination of behaviors, that become progressively more threatening, precede an actual attempt at harming the opponent.

A LIST OF DISPLAYS THAT MAY SIGNAL FORTHCOMING AGGRESSION:

- Direct eye contact
- Showing teeth /retracting lips
- Guarding an object
- Alert body
- Growling
- Backing away
- Ears “at alert” /erect
- Standing over an object
- Tense body
- Alert tail
- Snapping
- Hackles Up

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- Biting
- Jumping Up
- Ears pointed back (i.e. laying flat down)
- Tail held low
- Back arched & head low
- Trembling
- Hysteria
- Killing (cats, other dogs, etc.)
- Laying head over another dog's neck
- Chasing
- Grabbing objects / food
- Tail between the legs
- Tail low/ between legs with wag
- Licking lips
- Pacing
- Humping or mounting
- Eyes glazed over
- Cowering

An excellent resource describing canine body language through photographs is: Aloff, B. Canine Body Language. A Photographic Guide. Dogwise, Wenatchee, WA. 2005.

Some Types of Aggression

COMPETITIVE AGGRESSION: A dog will compete for access to valued resources, including sexual activity, comfortable and familiar places, and familiar social objects. From his perspective, the dog is thinking, "I'm not spoiled rotten, I just want what I want, and I want it NOW!", or "This is my human, YOU, stay away from my human, or else." An example is: Favorite human is sitting on the couch; dog is lying next to him on the couch; when someone tries to approach favorite human and sit down, the dog begins to growl.

Rover's Story: I was asked to raise a pup to become a service dog because I had experience training dogs in obedience. Little did I know it was a decision that would change my life. There were strict parameters to be followed regarding how the pup would be raised. He was required to attend basic obedience classes twice a week. When we would arrive at class he would be very animated. He would jump and bark at the sight of other dogs. However, he was not allowed to socialize, as interaction between the dogs was not allowed. Therefore, his socialization primarily consisted of interaction with other dogs at my home. They were his pack. He played very rough, but knew his place; one look from the alpha female would stop him in his tracks.

At 7 months old he was dropped from the service program because of his large size and intense drive. I was given the opportunity to adopt him. Knowing his drive would need a focus in the form of a job, we began AKC tracking which ultimately brought me to the world of SAR. He progressed in his training. I decided to attend a seminar to expand my limited knowledge of SAR. This proved to be more of a learning experience than I ever anticipated.

Being exposed to numerous strange dogs brought out a side of my dog I had not realized existed. He had always barked and gotten excited around other dogs; I always thought, "he just wants to play".

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Rover's Story (con't.): While waiting in line for our turn to work, he charged another dog. The suddenness of his action not only knocked me down but dragged me ten feet. If I had not held onto the lead, I am not sure what would have happened. I was determined to get through the rest of the seminar without another incident, so I positioned myself away from the other dogs. If another dog approached near by, I got worried and tightened up on his lead. These actions only made matters worse.

Looking back now I see all the little signs that I had missed. When he played, even as a pup, he was very rough. Driving in the car, he would bark wildly when he saw another dog. He sometimes lunged and barked when near other dogs. What I had interpreted as frustration at not being allowed to play were actually displays of aggression. I had to face the fact. Saying, "He only wants to play" or "He doesn't like another dog in his space" was not going to work. This was a serious problem that had to be faced and fixed or this dog could not continue in SAR. I was very fortunate to have supportive team members who were willing to help us work through the problem. It was not an easy task. In the beginning, everyone had to make sure their dogs were not loose when my dog was working and I was always on the lookout for loose dogs that might be in the area. It is very difficult to concentrate on searching when your attention is divided.

After reading everything I could on aggression, I felt my dog's aggression was a result of fear. This is not an uncommon cause of aggression. Since he had had limited socialization with other dogs when he was a pup, I don't think he really knew how to behave. My tightening up on the lead to keep him away from other dogs reconfirmed to him that other dogs were something to be wary of. For his rehabilitation, I emphasized obedience work. I needed to have him under my total control even when off lead. More importantly, he needed to know that I could control any situation. As I gained more confidence, so did he. My anxiety diminished and so did his. This was not accomplished overnight, it took several months to see progress. One of my proudest moments was, when on a search, he loaded calmly with other dogs to be transported to the search area.

The Moral: Aggression is a serious problem especially if it occurs in SAR dogs. There are no perfect dogs and each will face different challenges. It is vital when picking a SAR candidate that you choose a partner with the best chance of success. Some challenges can be easily overcome. Aggression is not one of them. Seek the advice of knowledgeable handlers. If you are faced with an aggression issue, be open and honest about it. Ask for help. It will not go away on its own. The sooner you seek help and resolve the situation the better.

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PROTECTIVE / TERRITORIAL / MATERIAL AGGRESSION and RESOURCE

GUARDING: Unless trained to do otherwise, a dog will often protect what he perceives to be his. From the dog's perspective, he's thinking, "That is MINE." or "Leave my place alone." or "This is my home." Examples of this include, a dog biting when a stranger reaches over his fence to pet him; a dog guarding "his" car like he is guarding his life, complete with a full display of teeth showing and biting if a stranger puts a hand in an open window; and guarding food or the areas or locations where the food is kept.

Reading a Smile: Dogs are very good at reading human body language, but unfortunately humans are generally poor at reading dog body language. Dog behavior is not defined by only one body part or posture, therefore we must be aware of combinations of postures that express what a dog is trying to communicate, as well as the context in which the behaviors are displayed. Consider these two situations, both with direct eye contact and curled lips exposing the teeth.

Brady, a Border Collie mix, comes near Liz (another Border collie) who is chewing on a rawhide. Liz gives direct eye contact, curls back her lips and shows her teeth. Is Liz being aggressive? Well, her display is accompanied by her ears being forward, her head lowered and a low menacing growl and the presence of a resource (the rawhide) to guard. The answer is YES. This display of lips curled and teeth exposed is definitely an aggressive posture.

Jake, a Chesapeake Bay Retriever, hears his owner coming home and rushes to the front door. As the door opens, Jake makes direct eye contact, curls back his lips and shows his teeth. Is he being aggressive? Well, his display is accompanied by relaxed ears, a relaxed body, a wagging tail, no growls and neutral body orientation (not leaning forward or backwards). The answer is NO. This display of lips curled and teeth exposed is definitely NOT aggressive. You have just experienced the "Chessie smile". They are famous for it. The Chessie smile is reserved for those people whom the Chessie considers part of its pack and is very pleased to see. It is in fact an honor to be smiled at by a Chessie, because this means you are well loved and respected by this dog. However, this very act of affection has been misinterpreted by some people as aggression because only one signal was read, the show of teeth. As a result some dogs have been reprimanded for this display. Imagine the confusion experienced by the dog at being punished for displaying genuine affection and warmth towards people. If only the people had read the rest of the dog's body language to understand what Jake was trying to communicate.

DOMINANCE AGGRESSION: This dog is controlling, has little social tolerance, and will battle over everything to maintain status. In his perspective, he's thinking, "I am in charge." or "I want to be in charge." or "I am the boss of you!" Examples of this

AGGRESSION and SOCIALIZATION

type of aggression are the dog snapping at his owner when they wake them up from sleep or when they try to move them off the bed/sofa/etc. Another example is one dog standing over another dog and getting into a fight.

PAIN INDUCED AGGRESSION: When a dog is in pain, he may act out aggressively to avoid the pain. From his perspective, the dog is thinking, "I am hurt. Don't touch me." or "That has hurt me in the past. I don't want to be hurt again." Examples of this type of aggression are a dog snapping or biting at the vet when being given a shot, or at its handler after being given a collar correction when it has an ear infection.

FEAR AGGRESSION: This type of aggression is primarily a learned response. An insecure or fearful dog learns he can repel a perceived threat. From his perspective, the dog is thinking, "I need to protect myself." or "You are backing me into a corner, Mister!" or "Leave me alone!" or "OK, you are the boss, just don't hurt me." Examples of this are the dog lunging or biting when a child runs toward him for a hug or a stranger sticks out his hand to pet the dog, ignoring the cowering and growling behavior displayed by the dog.

"When a dog is fearful it will usually run and hide in an attempt to avoid confrontation. However, if continually threatened and with retreat prevented, the dog's last resort is to try and convince the intruder to retreat. The dog may snarl, snap bark and bite – it acts aggressively (Dunbar, 1999).



INTER-DOG AGGRESSION:

A dog that hasn't been socialized with other dogs is often aggressive when he meets them. He's never learned how to communicate with other dogs and sees them as a threat to himself or his dominance. He may well be a "wanna-be dominant" dog. From his perspective, he's thinking, "Hey Buddy – You wanna piece of me?" or "Hey, you lookin' for a fight?" or "I'll take you on!"

From a human perspective, this dog is constantly picking fights with other dogs for no discernible reason. This type of aggression is easily seen when the dog is being walked. Aggression is triggered by the sight of another dog approaching and this "wanna-be" tough dog usually gets into trouble because his status is not secure and

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he encounters dogs willing to take up his challenge. The dog may lunge or bark toward the strange dog, and if not controlled, may start a fight.

IDIOPATHIC AGGRESSION: Idiopathic means “for unknown reasons.” This type of behavior is linked to neurological disorders like seizures. This is difficult to determine unless you can rule out a neurological disorder. Confused, the dog may be thinking, “Who are you?” or “Where am I?” or “I don’t know what I am doing.” This dog needs to be kept separate from other dogs, because he cannot be trained to reduce his aggressive reactions.

LEARNED AGGRESSION: A dog may be trained to be aggressive or learn through trial and error that certain aggressive behaviors gain him what he wants. From his perspective, the dog is thinking, “I know what to do and I am going to do it.” or “I am trained to attack.” or “You are scaring me, I know if I snap at you, you will go away and leave me in peace.” A police “protection dog” is a dog trained to find his target and bite the target. A dog may also learn that aggression leads to a successful outcome, such as when a timid or fearful dog feels uncomfortable to the point it snaps at the person reaching for it. If the person moves away, the dog may “learn” that aggression is the pathway to his desired outcome. The next time the situation arises, the dog may choose not to wait as long to snap and may begin to generalize this defensive behavior in situations when he finds itself feeling frightened. “If I bite, the scary thing goes away!”

What You Should Know About Aggression

AVOIDING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN DOGS: While it is not always possible, the best way to prevent your dog from developing unnecessary aggressive behavior is to engage in a comprehensive socialization and obedience program from a very young age. There are many books available on this subject. For more information, contact a behavioral specialist, local obedience and/or working dog club.

“Puppyhood is the most important phase of a dog’s life, since this is the most opportune time to influence the development of its character. It is so much easier to prevent the development of personality problems than it is to attempt to change them once they have become firmly entrenched as potentially dangerous habits” (Dunbar, 1999).

TOP 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT AGGRESSION:

- There are different types of aggression.
- People have a wide range of ideas about what aggression is and what it looks like.

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- Aggression is any behavior that prevents safe handling and working with the canine.
- If a dog has not shown aggression in the past it does not mean he will not express aggression in the future.
- Aggression is one of the many social behaviors used by dogs to communicate information.

Scientific Study: Vas et al. (2005), investigated the responsiveness of multiple breeds of adult dogs to being approached by unfamiliar people. The strangers approached with direct eye contact, but in either a friendly manner (at a normal walk and speaking to the dog by name in a friendly manner) or a threatening approach (moving slowly and haltingly without any verbal communication and a slightly bent upper body). Despite direct eye contact in both types of approach, the dogs acted appropriately according to the other human behavioral cues. The study demonstrated that the domestic dog has become socially skillful at interpreting a combination of human cues; in this case eye contact, body posture, way of movement (walking/halting), and verbal cues. In addition, these researchers demonstrated that breeds, such as Belgian Shepherds who function to watch, guard and herd, were more responsive to the threatening behavior patterns displayed by the humans, than breeds, such as sled dogs and retrievers, who function to work in cooperation with other pack members. Sled dogs and retrievers had a lower sensitivity to the human behavior displays. This supports a role for the contribution of a breed-specific genetic make-up. In other words, **the jobs for which we have specifically bred dogs require various degrees of association with humans and the traits we have selected for during that process have resulted in different breeds having different sensitivity to human behavior cues.**

AGGRESSION SCREENING TESTS: There are a number of good tests available to test for aggression. However, very experienced and knowledgeable people should always do such evaluations. Except for the extreme, interpreting aggressive tendencies is a complicated behavioral assessment and beyond the abilities of the ordinary dog owner.

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Scientific Study: Svartberg (2006) found breed-typical behavior corresponding to specific behavioral traits: playfulness, curiosity/fearlessness, sociability and aggressiveness by studying data from a standardized behavior test of 13,097 dogs of 31 breeds. More importantly he found that these breed-typical behaviors were highly affected by breeding selections made in the recent past, suggesting rapid changes in personality in a relatively few generations. **This suggests the importance of behavioral considerations in dog breeding and why you should ask to see the parents and grandparents of your prospective puppy if possible and if not, such as with a rescued dog, to take into consideration breed-specific behaviors.**

Canine Social Behaviors



Teke (Bloodhound)

It is critical that a SAR dog be comfortable in a variety of situations and stimuli, such as sights, sounds and smells. As discussed before, a SAR dog must be happy and confident around people of different ethnicities, ages, genders, in uniforms and various work gear, and around a variety of other animals.

For a puppy, a critical socialization period exists prior to 16 weeks. If a dog does not have positive interactions with a variety of people and places before that time, it can impact him for the rest of his life. This is the time when the dog learns what is safe and what is scary. A dog that is not socialized with people during this time is more likely to be wary, or even fearful of people. Such fear may manifest as aggression.

The basic way to socialize a puppy or dog is to introduce him safely, comfortably and continually to new sights, sounds, places, and people. The experience must be positive. Any small trauma can be remembered into adulthood and negatively affect behavior.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNDER-SOCIALIZATION:

- Biting / Aggression
- Fear
- Running / Darting / Cowering

Scientific Study: Freedman et al. (1961) determined that **inadequate socialization and environmental exposure in puppies leads to fearfulness.**

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Age makes a difference: A power plant near one handler's home is a common refuge for stray dogs. The handler has monitored their presence for years and most of them are very wild, but some will let you pet them. One year a stray female had a litter. Some of the workers were able to catch the puppies when they were very young and adopt them to loving homes where they interacted with people and have become great pets. One pup eluded capture. When finally trapped, the pup was neutered and adopted out and her wild mother was neutered and released back into the safe power plant area. Unfortunately, the pup was quickly returned because she was afraid of everything and everyone. She was over 16-weeks old and had never interacted with humans before. Now she lives with her handler and has a happy life. However, she never completely trusts people, and only lets her handler touch her. She refuses to come inside and likes to keep her distance from people. She loves playing with the other dogs and going for walks, but she will never be a cuddly dog that wants to be by your side. With ongoing training she might eventually become more comfortable with people and places, but she will never be completely socialized.

TOP 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SOCIALIZATION:

- Love isn't enough. Love is important in the development of all dogs, but just petting a dog at home can't take the place of meeting a variety of people and experiencing a variety of situations in a variety of places.
- Training can help many socialization issues, but not all.
- It is your responsibility to control the environments you use for socialization so that the dog or puppy does not become frightened.
- The foundation for good socialization is laid when the dog is a puppy, but maintenance of a sound social attitude demands continuing social experiences throughout the dog's life.
- A SAR dog should be extremely well socialized.

Scientific Study: Freedman et al. (1961) studied the consequences of withholding or allowing human socialization with puppies between the ages or 2 to 14 weeks. They determined that if human socialization was withdrawn from **puppies between 5-14 wks of age** that normal relations could not thereafter be established. This period coincides with motor and perceptual development in puppies. In addition, the motivation to flee from strange species is not yet strong at this age. Therefore, this appears to be a **critical period for the formation of primary social relationships** by canines.

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Sherlock was born in a shed on a man's property while he was out of town. The man graciously allowed the mother and her litter to stay in the shed until the puppies were weaned and then moved them to the animal shelter. However, Sherlock was never introduced to humans or touched by one until he reached the shelter when he was six weeks old. Though there was a plethora of puppies at the shelter, he wasn't socialized with them. He was adopted at 12 weeks and socialization began immediately. Puppy kindergarten followed as soon as Sherlock was comfortable in his new home. As a young pup, he would approach strangers warily and might allow a pet or two. He would run to other dogs in the park but not give them a play bow or submissive behavior. He bonded very tightly with his handler and the family, but did not accept children under any circumstances. Obedience classes followed and SAR training began when he was a year old. Sherlock was a motivated SAR dog and did a great job with SAR skills, but he had to be watched closely around dogs outside his search pack and strangers that approached him. He is six now and no longer in SAR. The moral of the story is that a poorly socialized dog can have the search skills to become a SAR dog, but extreme diligence by the handler is required to avoid an aggressive mishap. This puts both the dog and handler under stress and is not an optimum situation for a SAR team, and it would be much better to choose an adult dog that has been socialized properly or a puppy young enough that you can assure proper socialization.

Puppy Socialization

The optimum time to socialize a puppy is between four and fourteen weeks. Efforts can be made with older dogs, but they may have already adopted bad social patterns that will be difficult to break. A dog that is under-socialized isn't necessarily out of the running to become a SAR dog, but it can be a huge challenge even for an expert trainer. If your older dog is not well socialized, please consult with an expert trainer and seriously consider whether you truly have the time and skill to work with the dog.

In socializing a puppy, some tips include:

- Adopt the puppy as one of the family and maximize safe opportunities for interactions with both humans and other animals. Dogs are pack animals and require close contact with their humans and other dogs. Separating and isolating a dog from its pack is interpreted as punishment by the dog.
- Enroll the pup in puppy kindergarten so he has the opportunity to play and interact with the other pups. This is where he learns the proper way to approach other dogs and to read other dogs' body language.
- Let him see you as his pack leader that will protect him if needed.

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- Invite people and their pups or gentle dogs over to play. Supervise the play so if it starts to get too aggressive, you can intervene.
- Do not allow your puppy to go up to an unknown dog. If the dog is puppy aggressive the resulting psychological trauma inflicted on the pup can be difficult to undo or can even affect your dog for his entire life.

- Be careful introducing your pup to children. Often children do not understand how to properly interact with dogs. Children love to “hug” dogs. However, dogs do not hug and while humans think dogs should calmly accept a hug, this can easily be interpreted as a



Herc (Bloodhound)

- threat by the puppy. In addition, children are very unpredictable and their exuberant movements can be scary to a puppy, and they can be unintentionally rough and inflict pain on the puppy. Introduce your puppy to children that are calm and gentle and interact well with dogs.
- Introduce the puppy to small groups before meeting a larger group of animals or people. Be vigilant in watching your puppy and be sure no undue scary events occur.
- Walk the puppy around the neighborhood to meet new people and experience unfamiliar sites and sounds. Be sure to ask people if they would like to meet and greet your pup before you approach too closely. Oddly enough, some people can resist the impulse to pet your wonderful puppy! Then instruct them as to how you would like them to approach your puppy. Have food or a favorite toy available so they can play with your puppy.
- Introduce the puppy to numerous types of people and situations, ensuring the pup isn't frightened. If you see fear in the pup, remove him from the situation without coddling him.

Things you might want to consider exposing your puppy to are listed in “100 Exposures in 100 Days” – from The Whole Dog Journal, www.whole-dog-journal.com. Below is a modification of that list, but you should add your own, specific to your discipline of SAR:

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- Ambulances
- Babies in backpacks
- Men with beards
- Crowded areas
- Sirens
- People on skateboards
- Foreign food markets
- People in wheelchairs



Bo (Dalmatian x Aussie)

- Construction sites
- People in strange positions or situations
- People following – support personnel
- People with umbrellas/things in their hands
- People with glasses – sunglasses, too
- Nighttime walks and dark places
- Debris piles and garbage dumps



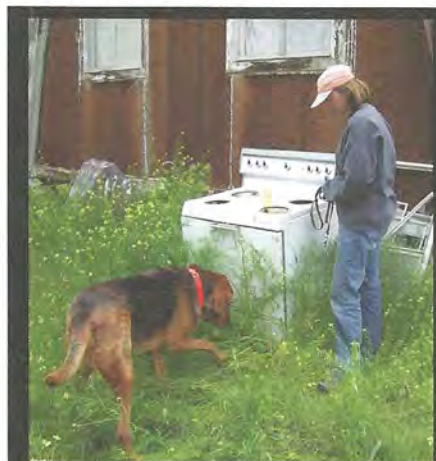
Aspen (Rottweiler)

- People on crutches
- Inside grocery stores – lots of smells
- Babies in strollers
- Other dogs and barking dogs
- People of various ages
- Farm animals
- Cats, rodents and other species



Liz (Border Collie)

- People with hats
- People who are sick
- Kids playing sports
- Slick floors inside buildings
- Bicycles and scooters
- People in uniform
- People of different ethnicities
- The vet's office!



Herc (Bloodhound)

AGGRESSION and SOCIALIZATION

In closing, we will leave you with a quote by the noted canine behaviorist, Dr. Ian Dunbar (1999):

"A socialized dog would rather socialize than fight or bite."

Take Home Points to Remember

- **A SAR dog should be well socialized and free from aggressive tendencies.**
- **It is your job to introduce your SAR dog to many different experiences and situations in a supportive and positive manner.**
- **It is your job to recognize reactivity in your dog and immediately begin behavioral modification.**
- **Socialize, socialize, socialize! It is the best thing you can do for you and your SAR dog.**
- **As difficult as it may be, you must acknowledge if your dog's temperament is unsuitable for SAR work and find him an alternate occupation. You owe it to your dog, your teammates, and the person you are tasked to find.**

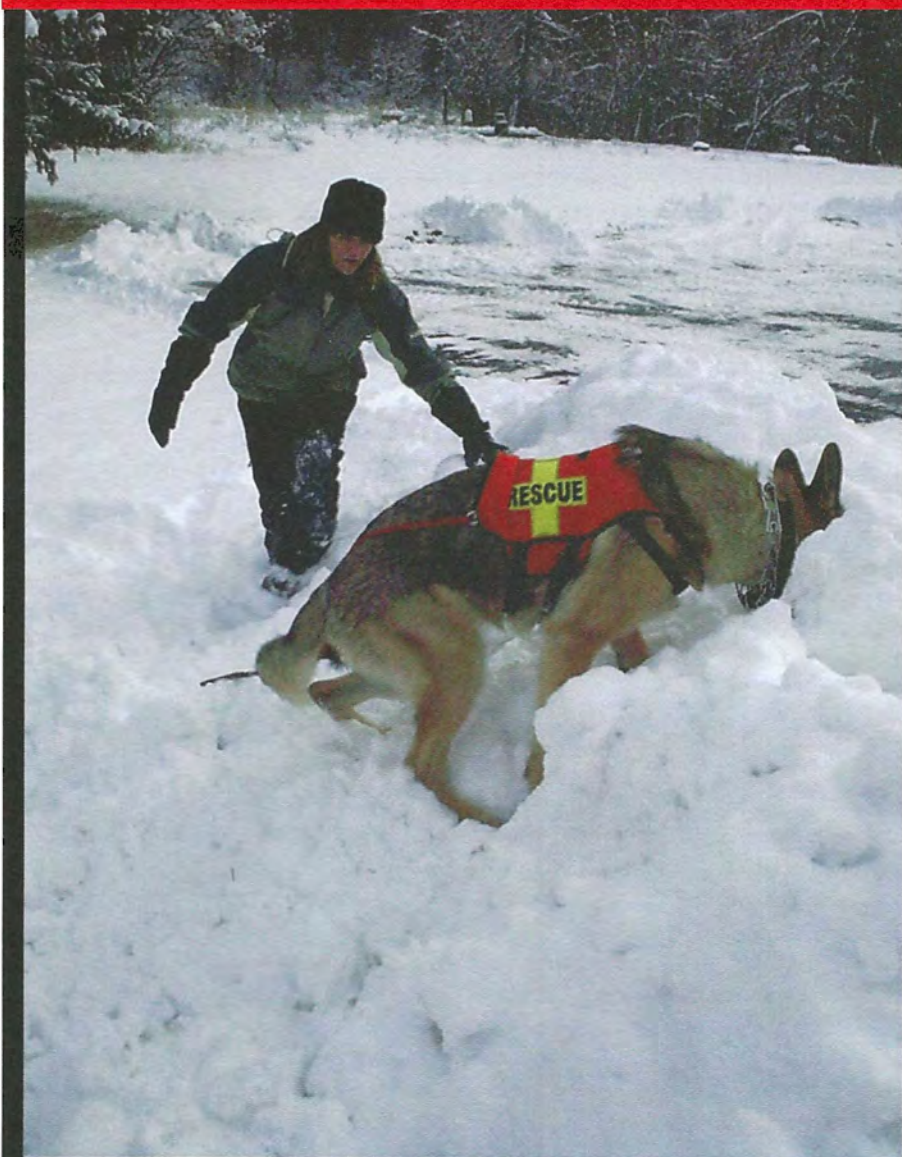
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AVALANCHE



Summit (German Shepherd Dog)

Chapter 5 ANXIETY and FEAR

A canine SAR team will be placed in many stressful situations during their search work. These may range from a case of “nerves” during a certification test, to the overwhelming external stimuli that can occur during an actual search, to a possible state of depression at the conclusion of a search. These situations can cause anxiety and fear in a canine, and it is up to the handler to help his partner through them. Fear is a normal, self-protective response to an event perceived as potentially painful or injurious. An extremely fearful dog does not tend to make a good search dog. A fearful canine can’t do his job, because he is concerned with his survival and may be in a fight or flight state.

Whereas fear is an immediate reaction to a specific stimulus or situation, anxiety is a chronic state of non-specific apprehension, arousal and vigilance (Lindsay, 2001). Anxious dogs are tense and braced to respond to a threat they cannot adequately predict. They will be too fearful to work when the cause of their anxiety is present during a search. Anxiety is not the same as fear, however when a canine is unsure what will happen and its stress is not relieved, it may escalate into fear and, with increasing pressure, into panic. They may become defensive toward humans or other dogs when they are afraid. By learning to recognize early signs of anxiety or stress in a canine, the handler can help prevent their partner from getting to the point of fight or flight.

Indications of Anxiety and Fear

It is important for the handler to be able to “read” their dog. This means they understand canine body language and behavior. When the canine becomes anxious, he may display behaviors such as jumping up on the handler, biting the lead, or acting like a clown. Despite the fact that the handler may think the canine has been waiting for the opportune time to embarrass him/her, this is not the case. The canine is trying to communicate his uneasiness with the situation. Some canines are very subtle and their only display may be yawning, tongue licking or excessive grooming. If the anxiety is not relieved at this stage, it can grow into fear.

Once in a fearful state, the canine will use body language to express himself. It is fairly easy to see when a dog is anxious or fearful if the dog is cowering under a bush and shaking. Other clues can include when dogs tuck their tail, lower their head or body, lay their ears back, retract the corners of their mouth, and pant. Their paw pads will begin to sweat and the eyes dilate and look glassy. They may nervously lick or salivate, and shiver or tremble. If a dog is frightened of a person or another dog, he may also avoid eye contact.

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Dash (a mix) showing mild signs of stress while working.

A fearful dog will generally either freeze or try to escape. If the path of retreat is blocked, then the tension rises and the dog may wrinkle his nose, raise his hackles, and curl his lips or growl. The dog is signaling that he's not going to back down. Feeling cornered, restrained or threatened with no way out may result in a defensive attack. Extreme fear can result in panic, immobility, loss of bowel and bladder control, evacuation of the anal glands, whining, yelping or shrieking and a frantic scramble to escape.

Puppies generally won't start a fight; they may show fear by rolling over on their backs and/or urinating. If the handler is not aware of what is happening and doesn't control the situation, it could result in the puppy completely shutting down or the fight instinct taking control.



Turbo (German Wirehaired Pointer mix) - Puppy showing submission.

Types of Fear

Fear related problems often involve one or more of the following factors (Lindsay, 2001):

- Genetic or neurobiological predisposition.
- Early socialization or environmental exposure deficits.
- Aversive or dysfunctional learning.
- Underlying medical condition, such as hypothyroidism.

New situations, unfamiliar people and canines, loud noises, being handled by strangers, or separation from their handler are some of the many things that may cause anxiety and fear in canines. The SAR canine will be faced with all of these situations and must be confident enough to work through them. If the canine cannot

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adapt, no matter how well trained, he will not be able to concentrate on his job.

HAND SHY: A hand shy dog is one that flinches when anyone brings a hand toward them. The two primary causes of this behavior are lack of socialization to people at a young age and being struck with a hand.

This is a problem for a search dog for several reasons. First, it is common for the family of the lost person and for other searchers to want to pet the SAR dog. If the dog flinches, bares his teeth or appears to be threatening, it reflects badly on the entire search team. Second, if a person insists on touching the dog or approaches too rapidly, the dog may become reactive and reflexively lunge or bite. Third, if the dog is busy worrying about people touching him, he isn't focused on his search responsibilities. Finally, once the dog finds his victim he needs to be amenable to the petting and praising that might ensue. A policeman with a canine once said, "My dog may bite them once he finds them, but at least he'll find them." This may not be very reassuring to the person found!

If you choose a puppy, you'll be able to begin handling them with care so they don't become hand shy. If handled often and gently, a puppy soon learns that good things come from hands and has no reason to fear them. Adult dogs adopted from a shelter have usually been tested for positive social interactions before they're offered for adoption. Continued positive socialization experiences will reinforce friendly traits. Never, hit your dog! In addition to learning to be afraid of hands, brooms, newspapers, and other painful things, you risk ruining your search dog. The internal bones in a dog's snout are critical to their ability to scent, and they are very delicate. Damaging these bones through trauma, like smacking your dog on the nose, could result in permanent harm to a good search dog.

Lizzie's saga: Lizzie, an Australian Shepherd/Border Collie mix, wasn't afraid of sounds of any type until one Fourth of July when she was a year old. A neighbor was shooting pop bottle rockets that landed near her in her small yard while she was outside. From that day forward, she was extremely fearful of all popping noises, such as guns, thunder cracks, a three-ring binder snapping shut.

GUN SHY: Many dogs are sensitive to loud noises and become fearful once they have had a bad experience for which they weren't prepared. This type of fear is a problem for a search dog since they are required to search during thunderstorms, fireworks, and hunting season.

When dealing with a fear response, the first rule is to not sympathize and coddle the dog at the first sign of fear. In the dog's mind, he connects the dots from noise -> fear reaction -> positive reinforcement from his owner. He's just learned a new way to get attention! Conversely, don't punish the dog for his fear reaction. Now he'll connect

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the dots from noise -> fear reaction -> punishment -> a reason to be even more afraid. The best response is no response except to remove the dog from the situation quickly and calmly or distract him by refocusing his attention elsewhere and rewarding with treats or toys.

You can avoid the problem in your newly adopted dog, which has not been previously exposed to gunfire, by "conditioning" the dog before they are in close proximity to the noise. There are various conditioning approaches that can be used to accustom dogs to loud noises. It depends on the dog's personality and the severity of the fear. A source describing conditioning approaches is Dog Talk by Ross and McKinney (1992).

One conditioning method is done by purposefully exposing the dog to gunshots far in the distance while interacting with the dog in a positive manner and keeping his focus away from the sounds. If he likes to retrieve, then play Frisbee®. If he likes food, then do games or obedience with big jackpot rewards of food for keeping his focus on you and the task at hand. He should barely be aware of the sound of gunshots in the distance. Slowly over time, move the dog closer to the sound while continuing the playing of very positive games. This will keep the focus on you so the gunshot sounds are just white noise in the background and that noise is associated with fun interactions with his handler. Gradually progress closer to the sound until eventually you are beside it and the dog is more interested in playing with you than in the shots being fired. This can take minutes, hours or days depending on the dog and how distracted he is by the noise. Another method, which has had some success, is using tapes or CDs with gunshots interspersed with classical music to desensitize dogs. However, not all methods work on every dog.

Thunderstorms aren't as controllable as gunfire and offer a unique challenge. If a puppy shows any indications of anxiety or fear with the first clap of thunder, it's time to get out the treats or a favorite toy. Distract the dog with praise, toy or food rewards during the thunder so that they will

Lizzie's saga continues: Lizzie spent the last hunting season outside with her handler during most of each day. She was slowly conditioned to the once frightening sound of gunfire, by distracting her with her favorite toy, a Frisbee®. By the end of the hunt, instead of cowering under the porch swing or truck, she was joyfully ignoring the nearby gunfire and focusing on repeatedly bringing her Frisbee® to her handler for the chance to retrieve it again.

associate fun and treats with the sound. This technique works to some extent with dogs that have already been frightened by loud noises.

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**Cephira
(Border
Collie)
learns to
interact
with
children**

STRANGERS & CHILDREN:

A fear of strangers or children is a major problem for a SAR dog. After all, the people a live-find dog will search for will be strangers and many will be children. If the dog is afraid of either, he will be difficult to motivate to search for that which he fears. Also, every search base camp is crowded

with strangers, many who will want to pet the dog. The dog will not be able to fully focus on his job if he is focusing instead on worrying who the strangers are and trying to avoid contact.

Preventing the development of fear of strangers and children is far easier than rehabilitating a dog that has already become fearful. This means special emphasis on prearranged socialization training between seven and fourteen weeks of age. Positive experiences for the puppy are a must when he meets men, women, children, big people, little people, people in uniforms, and people in hats. Petting, playing, and "good dog" are the order of the day.

Because preschoolers don't understand how their actions are perceived by a puppy or adult dog, never leave the dog alone with them. Very active or mischievous children or ones who have never been around dogs need to be monitored closely while interacting with dogs or puppies. It is telling that boys nine years old and under are bitten by dogs more often than any other group. Not only could the child be hurt, but the dog may become fearful or even aggressive toward children because of a bad experience.

OTHER DOGS: There are several instances when SAR dogs are exposed to other dogs during their SAR work: 1) practicing with their own SAR members, 2) working with other teams and their SAR dogs while on a mission, 3) training with unknown SAR dogs at a seminar, 4) encountering the lost person's dog, or 5) encountering civilian dogs while training or on a search. Some canine SAR teams allow their dogs to socialize and play as part of their weekly training. As a result, they usually develop a pack order within the group which reduces fear and friction.



**Team members cooling off
together after training.**

ANXIETY and FEAR

When encountering dogs outside their pack, however, some dogs may become frightened or may react defensively or aggressively if challenged.

Once a dog has shown fear that has led to aggression, the handler will often become nervous when another dog approaches his in anticipation of a possible unpleasant outcome. The handler reacts by holding the leash tighter and may even try to quickly move the dog out of the situation in a panic. The dog may interpret the unintentional anxiety in their handler as "Hey, something is very wrong here and that other dog is causing it!" As a result, the dog may feel the need to protect the handler from danger, in this case, the other dog. Consequently, the two dogs have a disagreeable exchange, which makes the handler even more nervous the next time his dog is approached by a strange dog. Thus a *vicious* cycle has now been created.

Scientific Comment: Lindsay (2005) discusses how when an owner and his dog are approaching a fear-eliciting object that the owner's apprehension about his dog's behavior may significantly influence the outcome. In essence, "...the dog is not likely to attribute the owner's worry to itself or to its behavior, but will more likely interpret the owner's worry as something bearing on the developing situation, perhaps increasing its own weariness". Effective rehabilitative therapy must, therefore include behavioral training for the owner and the adoption of a more confident attitude which helps the dog be more secure, confident and better able to cope with its fear.

Again, it is always preferable to avoid the creation of a problem rather than have to fix one that has already been established. Socialization is the key. Arrange socialization periods with other non-aggressive dogs. Dogs are great at learning from other dogs and well socialized, self-confident dogs will show unsocialized dogs the proper way to interact in the dog world. Dog parks may not be the

best place to socialize a pup or young dog because pack order has not been established and challenges are likely. Also, you have no idea of the level of social skills of the unknown dogs that your puppy or dog may encounter at a dog park.

It is very important that puppies not be exposed to truly aggressive behaviors from other dogs. These are not the same as puppies being corrected by adult dogs for unruly puppy obnoxiousness. Corrections from adults are actually vital for puppies to learn proper dog-dog etiquette and adult social skills. These types of corrections should not result in any physical harm to puppy, just to his ego. A handler must learn to recognize the difference and allow the correction, but not physical harm. There are also particular ages in a dog's life when they are learning and are very sensitive to scary things; these are called fear stages. If a dog encounters traumatic or scary events during one of these stages, it can result in long-lasting and irreparable damage to their self-confidence and temperament.

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Lindsay (2005): "Dogs experiencing fear may be functionally incapable of responding in an organized and purposeful way to a threatening situation." Extreme fear impedes purposeful action and may lead to debilitating or paralyzing effects. If the dog is unable to control the threatening situation, fear may escalate into panic. Dogs experiencing intense fear may cope by relying on primitive species-specific defensive reactions.

SEPARATION ANXIETY: Dogs are social animals and form strong bonds with their fellow pack members. The bond between the SAR dog and his handler is one of the strongest. Therefore, it is not uncommon for the dog to be a little anxious when separated from his pack, in this case, his handler. However, some dogs cannot handle the stress of separation. Their dependence on their handlers is great and they struggle to cope with being left alone. In severe cases, the resulting anxiety leads to destructive behaviors. There are many cases where dogs left alone at home have destroyed an entire room.

A SAR dog should learn to wait relatively calmly and quietly during his handler's absence. He may be required to stay crated in a vehicle or hotel room by himself.

A dog that is loud or

destructive is not a good ambassador for a SAR dog team. A large part of a deployment is "hurry up and wait." A SAR dog is a high drive, motivated dog, but must have enough self-control to settle in and calmly wait for his handler.

Brady, a one year old rescued from a shelter, was so anxious while his handler was out training with her other dog that he barked, cried, and scratched the dashboard until the handler returned to him. This type of behavior is very distracting to everyone on the search team and puts unnecessary stress on the dog.

NEW SITUATIONS:

Fear at the Vet's Office: At 12 months (a definite fear period), a pup had a severe ear infection. The ear was very inflamed and painful and a trip to the vet was in order. The treatment was extremely traumatic for the pup and caused a high level of stress. Once the "flight" response took hold, it took three people to restrain the pup to sedate him. Needless to say, subsequent trips to the vet were not an experience this pup (or handler) looked forward to. Despite all efforts, the dog now must be muzzled whenever a vet examines his ears. Unfortunately, this fear will never be completely solved, so precautions must be taken.

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**“Insufficient socialization, therefore is the major reason why dogs become fearful. And fearfulness is the major reason why dogs fight and bite”
(Dunbar, 1999).**

“Oh, no! It’s the dog-squishing quadruped! I don’t care who’s hiding behind the rock over there. I’m out of here!”



“It’s big and black and coming straight out of the water! Yikes! It must be the Creature from the Black Lagoon – better bail and hightail it to shore!”



“Too big! Too loud! Should I bay with it, run away? Heck, I’ll just run in tight little circles right here so it can’t catch me!”



“Intellectually, I know it’s a gnarled old tree lying on the ground. However, I think I saw one of those dead branches stir, just a little. Yes, it’s definitely moving. Run, run...hide!”



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Teke, a one-year-old Bloodhound, became afraid of dead, fallen trees even after he'd been on many hikes in the mountains. His handler had to help him approach any threatening tree and introduce him to it to allay his fears. Three months later he's almost over this fear, but what a surprise to have something so unthreatening become a fear for him. Later his handler took him to the ophthalmologist (eye doctor). He was diagnosed with diffuse (immature) cataracts in both eyes. This affects his ability to see at a distance. As a result, objects in front of him appear as large blobs. This scares him and he jumps and runs. His handler has now trained him that when she says, "Let's check it out," it means it is safe to approach and he's no longer afraid and will check the object himself.

The first time a dog sees or hears something strange to him, depending on his sensitivities, he may develop a fear of it. During a search is absolutely the worst time to have this happen. Your dog will be distracted from his job and will refocus on the object. Consider what your dog is likely to encounter and arrange for a positive first interaction. Training, walking or hiking in areas similar to where the dog will be working will allow your dog to explore the area and you to control the situation as it occurs. Similarly, during water recovery training, allowing the dog to watch divers don their wet suits and then play with them for a minute before the diver goes into the water prevents the possibility of a fearful first encounter with the people attached to weird, scary things such as air tanks, buoyancy control vests and goggles.

Resolution of fear problems depends upon first isolating the fear eliciting situation or stimuli (Lindsay, 2001).

The dog will not be able to overcome some fears by himself and may need assistance. Desensitization and counter conditioning may be required. Sometimes the fear cannot be diminished and the handler must know how to deal with the situation when it occurs.

If the handler knows that certain things trigger the canine's fear, the handler should always be on the lookout. With the added stress of a deployment, the canine may not be able to override his anxiety and fear may take control. In this state, it will be impossible for the canine to function. If the handler is attuned to what is happening, he may intervene before the canine gets to this point. It may be something as simple as walking around the "horror" or taking the stairs rather than the elevator.

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Definitions –

Counter Conditioning and Desensitization are often used to modify unwanted behavior in dogs. Counter conditioning means training an animal, in response to a particular stimulus, to present a behavior that is counter to the undesirable behavior. For example, a dog cannot be lunging at another dog at the same time he is being asked to sit and focus on you for a treat. These are two competing behaviors.

Desensitization entails starting with the fearful situation as a low intensity, background distraction which does not elicit the unwanted behavior. Then systematically move the dog closer to the fearful situation while rewarding for wanted behavior. Increase the intensity, but in a gradual manner which does not provoke the fearful response.

How to Choose a Less Fearful Dog

When choosing a canine, whether from a breeder or a rescue shelter, be aware of signs of anxiety or fear as this will help you to decide if a puppy or an adult dog is the right partner. Look for a dog that is outgoing and confident. If you're looking at a puppy in his own home, take him outside or to another unfamiliar area so you can see how he reacts beyond the comfort zone of his own territory. He should be eager to explore new things. When confronted with an unfamiliar item, he may first approach it cautiously, but should soon overcome his nervousness and investigate the item. If the dog becomes startled or frightened, observe the time it takes for him to regain his composure. This will give you an indication of the dog's ability to cope with the extreme pressures of SAR work. Even though a shy or timid pup is adorable, he is not a good candidate for a SAR dog.

Scientific Study: Fox (1966) determined that puppies between the ages of 8-10 weeks are especially sensitive to fearful stimuli. **Persistent phobias can result from a single traumatic exposure** during this critical period. A phobia is a fearful response in excess of what is appropriate for the situation. Phobias do not decrease naturally over time.

How to Work Through Fear and Anxiety

Most pups go through fear periods during maturation. Everyday things may suddenly become "the bogeyman". It is during these times the handler must give the dog the support to confront his anxiety and overcome it. Forceful methods at this time can be

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counterproductive and place the dog under more pressure than fear alone. This can cause more extreme behaviors.



Sula showing anxiety and avoidance of the "scary" camera.

The Saga of Sula: When I got Sula she was four months old, and afraid of everything. She had no idea what toys were or how to play. She was at ease only when she was with other dogs, she shied from people, and she did not enjoy being touched. Like so many people, I had not done my homework. I wanted a puppy. An acquaintance had told me of a good breeder she knew with some Aussie puppies. When I saw the puppies, it was love at first sight. I missed the significance of the fact that this breeder had over 30

Aussies, most of which spent their time in outdoor concrete runs, nervously pacing in circles and barking at anyone who approached. None of her dogs had performance or working titles.

Once I got Sula home, I soon realized that she had gotten no socialization, and that she and her three littermates spent their time fenced off on the front porch with no toys or other stimulation. While we could not make up for the lack of early socialization, we immediately enrolled in puppy kindergarten, obedience and agility classes. Over the next five years, Sula slowly learned that people were nothing to be afraid of and were OK to be around. After lots of hard work, Sula and I got our AKC Companion Dog title. What a great moment for both of us. However, I am sad to report that Sula is the only one of the four littermates to have never bitten anyone. In fact, one sibling was put down because of escalating aggression toward people. If only they had gotten proper socialization during those first few months, their lives could have been so much better. This is not the end of Sula's story, keeping her confident and happy requires constant socialization and reinforcement. She will never be a cuddly dog but she is now happy.

This was a tremendous learning experience for me. I learned that breeders can "say" all the right things, but don't necessarily "do" the right things. You should visit their kennel and do your research. I have since gotten to know good breeders who spend quality time with their dogs, put working titles on them, socialize their pups, and provide an enriched environment. I would not trade Sula or our journey together for anything. The experience has taught me invaluable lessons about canine fear and the importance of proper early socialization.

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A better option is to slowly condition the dog to the situation causing the anxiety or fear through positive reinforcement. Although this approach takes more time and patience, it is less likely to place the dog under additional stress, which can escalate the fear.

Fear and Avoidance Behavior Rehabilitation - Excessive reliance on inhibitory techniques is not useful and should be avoided. Punishment may temporarily suppress aggressive behavior, but does not reduce the underlying emotional tension. It is therefore problematic in that it may result in exacerbation of the emotional arousal leading to aggressive behavior (Lindsay, 2001).

Slow and steady are the key words. If the canine sees the handler as a leader and believes the handler can control the situation, his confidence will grow. If the canine sees the handler as inconsistent or too demanding, he may never gain the self-confidence needed to overcome the anxiety or fear. There are many resources available on the internet and books which will provide information on how to handle anxiety and fear.

Mastering the Fear - “Although counter conditioning can be a very useful preliminary step in the management of fear, the ultimate goal is to ‘convince’ dogs that they can control or cope with the feared situation” (Lindsay, 2001). For example: a dog fearful of water is better rehabilitated not by simply becoming accustomed to being near water, but by gradually teaching the dog how to swim and ultimately to enjoy being in the water and participating in activities such as group play or retrieving.

Take Home Points to Remember

- **If stress is not relieved it can escalate to anxiety, to fear, to panic and possibly to defensive aggression.**
- **A single traumatic event can affect your dog’s behavior and confidence for the rest of his life.**
- **It is your job to recognize the early signals your dog displays when he is uncomfortable and to relieve the pressure before it escalates.**
- **Be vigilant. Preventing a traumatic incident with your dog is preferable to having to deal with the possible behavioral consequences in the aftermath.**

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TRACKING / TRAILING



Chief (German Shepherd Dog)

Chapter 6 PUPPY ENRICHMENT

Can a successful SAR canine be made or is it all genetics? The nature vs. nurture argument may always be with us. However, it should go without saying that you should start with good genetics. Like the old saying goes, you cannot make a silk purse from a sow's ear. You can also not make a great working dog from a genetically inferior individual. We look to an animal's pedigree, structure, health and individual achievements for the best traits.

In breeding two compatible individuals, or selecting a puppy from a rescue organization, we cross our fingers and hope for the best possible outcome. What if we can do more than cross our fingers? The environmental stimuli an individual is exposed

to during different developmental stages, can have a substantial impact on the inherited predispositions of that individual. This opens the door for manipulating the environment to enhance the good genetic inclinations while diminishing the bad. While there is a growing trend today to provide "environmental enrichment", it is nothing new; it has roots in the work on imprinting that Konrad Lorenz began in 1935 (Lorenz, 1970).

The U.S. Military investigated methods to improve performance of their canines as early as the sixties. These studies showed significant effects worth revisiting here. The researchers used neurological stimulation early in development to determine if there was any beneficial impact on the dogs. Some of the benefits noted, in what was called the "BioSensor program", were increased tolerance to stress, stronger cardiovascular performance, stronger adrenal glands and more disease resistance (Fox, 1974; Battaglia, 2001).

The pictures included are members of a single litter of Border Collies raised with the methods described in this chapter. All six puppies were placed into working SAR homes.

The parents were working dogs. The sire is out of proven herding bloodlines and a nationally certified SAR dog in several disciplines. The dam, also out of proven herding bloodlines, is certified as a therapy dog. Both possess agility, nerve strength, health, and vigor.



**Brigian
(The Dam)**

PUPPY ENRICHMENT



Nerve strength at 6 weeks riding on a moving, unstable noisy fire truck.

Today there are many studies on the effects of differential rearing of animals showing significant impacts on behavior of the adult (Beattie et al., 2000; Cheal et al., 1986; Prusky et al., 2000; Scott, 1962; Wright, 1983). Puppies exposed to an enriched environment are better adjusted, tractable, agile and have significant nerve strength. They also tend to be healthier and stronger. More and more, experienced handlers are looking for breeders and foster families that utilize these techniques to raise their puppies. The result is adult dogs that are better adapted to the variable environments they will encounter as SAR dogs.

We know that environment and socialization make lasting impressions on the development of a dog (Dodge, 1989). Environments that un-enriched dogs must struggle to adapt to,

the enriched dog adjusts to with self-confidence and seeming ease. Whether it is traversing a rubble pile with grace and balance, or methodically working a crime scene while disregarding lights, sirens, and other distractions. Environmental enrichment can give a dog that edge that all SAR handlers seek.



Pete (the sire) working rubble during post hurricane recovery efforts.

We can consciously or unconsciously manipulate the propensity of a dog by what we do or don't do during their lives, by what we allow or don't allow them to encounter, and by what we present or withhold from them in the way of experiences. It is not suggested that every puppy being raised in an enriched environment can be made into a great SAR dog, as heredity plays a key role in most all characteristics. However, studies on multiple species have shown that the lives and intelligence of individuals (including humans) interacting within an enriched environment are much enhanced.

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

Enrichment - How is it done?

All of the dog's senses are not fully functional at birth. Knowing the sequence of development of the senses is essential in planning how or when enrichment objects and exercises should be introduced. We can look to the work achieved by Drs. Scott and Fuller to reference the stages of development (Scott, 1962; Scott et al., 1974). Much of today's materials on puppy development and behavior will in some way touch on their research. They identified critical periods in the developmental timeline of puppies. These critical periods begin at birth, peak between 6 and 8 weeks, and extend into maturity (Dodge, 1989). Understanding the impact of these periods on the formation of a dog's temperament allows us to plan the enrichment tools and activities we use. Remember however, that this timeline is a generalization; each litter and each individual is unique in its development. Some will develop more slowly and some will excel early and quickly. Therefore, the enrichment plan must be dynamic and changeable. The person implementing the techniques must be observant and flexible, and adjust the challenge on an individual puppy basis to regulate the amount of stress applied and not overwhelm the puppies.

WEEK 1 (0-7 Days)

It is a common myth that during the first two weeks of life, a puppy is incapable of learning and requires little more than to have its basic needs met. To the contrary, learning begins before birth; it has been suggested that puppies, while still in the womb, learn scent recognition of its mother (Wells &



Hepper 2006). Puppies from birth through the first week of age have a sense of smell and touch (tactile and thermal). The BioSensor program exercises at this stage are very simple and take minimal time to do, only FOUR seconds per exercise and only once per day for the first 7 to 10 days.

The exercises to perform during the first 10 days are:

- Hold the puppy and using a cotton swap, gently rub between the toes.
- Place puppy, feet first, on a damp, refrigerated towel.
- Hold the puppy in a heads up position with both hands, so that his head is toward the ceiling and the tail is toward the floor.
- Hold the puppy in a tails up position with both hands so that his tail is toward the ceiling and the head is toward the floor.
- Hold the puppy cradled in both hands, on its back, and allow him to sleep if inclined to do so.

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

Keep in mind that litters raised in a home environment versus a kennel environment lend themselves more readily to the intensive human interaction required to supply this enrichment and socialization program.

The following is a description of the techniques and the timeline used to raise a litter of Border Collie puppies for SAR work (born on May 31, 2007):



24 hours old with soft toys and blanket texture. This dam welcomed toys and even brought them to the whelping box herself.

Different surfaces are placed in the whelping box for short periods of time beginning on day 3. Examples of these surfaces are a reed/grass placemat, a towel, a roughened piece of cardboard and different textures of carpet. During exposure, care is taken to ensure that the surfaces are not too slick. The surfaces are placed between the mother and the litter so that the puppies, sensing the presence of their mother, have to cross the surface to nurse. During this time other soft objects are also introduced into the whelping box, such as latex toys, plush toys, and

other soft, safe, non-toxic objects. The dam is observed for her attitude during all of these activities. If she becomes nervous or aggressive it could negatively influence the pups' reactions. Proper pre-selection of the breeding dam will reduce the potential for possible negative reactions. However, always observe carefully to determine if she needs to be removed at any time during the interactive periods.

It is very important not to utilize slick newspaper as the sole bedding in the whelping box. Even shredded newspaper does not give adequate footing and slows down the neurological development that enables the pups to get their footing. Slick surfaces can also result in life threatening conditions, such as swimmer puppy syndrome. Utilizing carpet or other soft, but textured, surfaces for secure footing ensures development of early muscle coordination and healthy pups. It also gets the pups on their feet more quickly than litters not given such floor surface stimulation.

WEEK 2 (8-14 days)

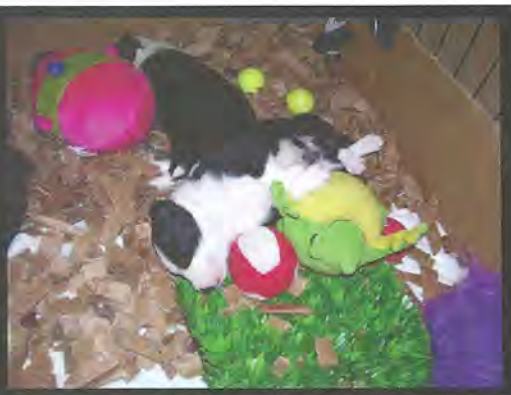
During this time continue to change out floor surfaces, but leave these surfaces in the whelping box for longer periods of time. Be sure anything placed in the box is safe so

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

that a pup cannot get wrapped or caught up in it. If a surface appears too challenging for the puppies, set it aside for a later date. The introduced surface should be novel enough in texture to be different from the whelping box floor, but the puppies should be able to cross the surface with little effort to get to Mom.

Since the puppies are gaining in strength at this time, introduced toys can be bigger, move, vibrate, and make noise, but should still be soft. During this time period the ears begin to open, therefore, a

Plastic grass and moving toys at 12 days old.



variety of noises should be introduced for short periods of time. Pairing music (at a moderate volume level) with nursing periods is a good method of sound introduction. Toys that make noise are also excellent sources of sound stimuli to be utilized. This is particularly important for some breeds, such as herding breeds, which can have sound sensitivity issues as adults.

For socialization purposes, bottle feeding of goat's milk can be introduced and the length of time the pups are handled can be increased. Handling should be positive in nature with light stress, such as turning them onto their backs and cradling them or rocking them in your hands for brief periods.



Bottle feeding raw natural goats milk for socialization.

Again, always evaluate the dam's reaction to the enrichment activities. If she becomes nervous, remove her from the situation and then continue with the pups or cease the activity altogether. Visual learning begins quickly, so it is especially important once the pups' eyes have opened that they do not observe their mother reacting to stimulus in a negative manner.

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

Inviting over puppy-savvy guests for short visits with the puppies allows for outside socialization to begin without removing the pups from the safety of their environment.

Be sure the pups do not observe the dam behaving in any inappropriate ways towards visitors or any other outside stimuli.

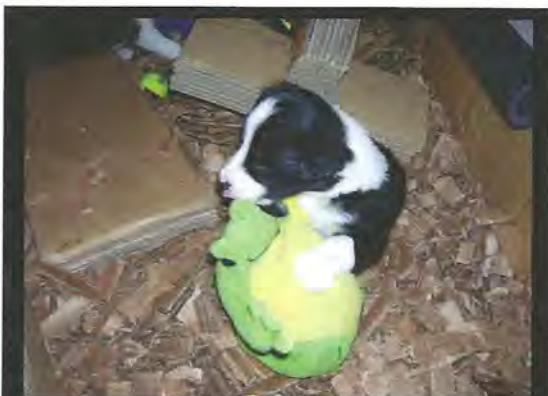


Cardboard confetti and rubber mats make for excellent footing for the toddling pups.

NOTE: Depending upon the speed of an individual litter's development, a transition period begins somewhere between 10 and 20 days when the ears and eyes of the pups open. Customizing the introduction of novel experiences to the litter's rate of development is essential.

WEEK 3 (15-21 days)

It has been observed that enriched animals develop at a faster rate than their un-enriched counterparts (Fox, 1974; Naka et al., 2002). This means the breeder must prepare to adapt the housing more quickly to mobile pups at an earlier age.



More toys and larger cardboard blocks are introduced.

Therefore, if there is not already a pen around the whelping box, it is time to expand the puppies' environment by placing a barrier around the whelping box that allows the puppies to start safely exploring and discovering their surroundings. If there are other dogs that are quiet, calm and non-aggressive, then while the mother is out of sight on a potty break or free time, this would be a good time to start introducing other dogs (cats of the same calm nature can also be introduced).

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

The puppies will still be nursing, but a little baby food can be mixed in with goat's milk and given in a small shallow dish. Using this as a "treat", the first obedience command can be introduced. Once the puppies are readily tasting the mixture, the COME command can be paired with the arrival of the food, thereby preconditioning them to the command. As the pan is placed in the pen and the puppies start to approach, say COME. This should be done consistently with each delivery of the treat.

During sessions of holding the puppies, put them down outside the pen for a few seconds for exposure to a new surface or area. This can be done two puppies at a time, as having a friend lessens the stress. Introduction of large cardboard blocks and cardboard confetti can enhance surface enrichment. A large box filled with a variety of sizes of cardboard confetti makes for a beginner rubble pile that is both safe and easy to clean.

Continue with the introduction of novel noises through CD's, toys, radio, and television, making sure that the levels are not too loud and that nothing utilized is frightening. Pairing the noise with feeding periods and nursing periods helps to condition a positive association with noise, and thereby reduces future stress with sound-sensitive breeds.

WEEK 4 (22-28 days)



Introduction of novel items: concrete block & wire door for tactile surfaces, tin pan for sound and texture, and hanging tug for 3-D games.



The pups should be solidly on their feet and a larger area for the puppies should be made. The whelping box can be removed and half of a plastic kennel or crate put in its place. This begins preparation for an easy adjustment to crating for sleep, travel, and confinement. Larger cardboard blocks, real brick blocks, hard toys and a variety of other obstacles, such as small wooden wobble boards can be

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

added to the play pen. Tug toys can be introduced as a way of getting the puppies to lift their heads and explore vertically. This begins three-dimensional problem-solving games.

The dam should start spending longer periods away from the pups. Allow the dam free access to exit the pen and return to feed and care for the pups at her discretion. This helps the pups begin developing some independence. Preferably, the dam should continue to spend the night sleeping with the pups. This is very similar to the routine found in wild wolf packs.

It is also desirable to provide areas to potty within the pen, but away from the sleeping area. Providing something soft such as artificial sheepskin in the kennel sleeping area continues to provide textural enrichment. It is helpful to physically place the pups into the sleeping area when they become sleepy or fall asleep in other parts of the pen, and equally important to move the pups into potty areas when they awake from naps.



Clicker training can be started by using baby food as the reward. Begin by dipping your finger in baby food, clicking and delivering the treat. At the introduction of the clicker, do not hold the clicker too close to the puppy, as the sound may be startling. One or two sessions per day consisting of about ten to fifteen clicks per session are sufficient.

NOTE: Continue the prior weeks' enrichment techniques while adding new elements each week. Be creative.

WEEK 5 (29-35 days)

More new items for discovery are introduced. A small collapsible tunnel can be added as the puppies are now playing with toys and each other. Instead of one large concrete block, there maybe more blocks to make a small (but STABLE) pile. Miniature see-saws and wobble boards can be placed



PUPPY ENRICHMENT

within the pen for safe, but unsteady footing that the pups will become very adept at traversing. The variety of enrichment toys that can be added are limited only by safety and your imagination. Some items, such as bubble-wrap box packing makes for a bouncy and crinkling noise can be added; but only while the puppies are under observation.

Use common sense and safety precautions and constantly watch the puppies around these objects. Never leave the puppies unattended with any objects in which they could suffocate or become entangled and injured.

The upper portion of the kennel is now added, but the door is left off. This is another step forward in preparation of allowing the pups to feel comfortable in a crate environment. Bedding may have to be removed if the pups begin chewing on the material. Continue to encourage napping in the crate by placing the pups in the crate when they appear sleepy.



Pup at 5 wks of age sleeping on concrete blocks.

The dam should be spending more and more time away from the pups and many breeders begin feeding the pups soft or pureed food at this time 3 – 4 times a day to supplement their diets and to begin the weaning process. Weaning should take 2 – 3 weeks to complete. Pups weaned early or abruptly often suffer from emotional and physical ailments (Fox, 1974).

The COME command should continue to be reinforced at feeding time, and now that the pups are familiar with a clicker, lure training of the SIT command can begin. There are many excellent books on the use of the clicker and luring techniques, some of which are recommended at the end of this book. Pups may begin short trips outside in the yard provided the weather and temperature permit it. If the dam is a friendly, confident dog and does not react to outside stimuli in a negative manner, allow their dam to accompany them on these brief outings.

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

NOTE: At this age imprinting for disciplines can begin. For example, for future HRD dogs, toys infused with cadaver scent can be introduced to familiarize the pups with the scent in a positive manner. Short, well planned tracks leading to the supper bowl can be set up to establish a good foundation in future trailing dogs and future disaster dogs can be fed atop a small, secure rubble pile after being encouraged to climb it. Be interactive, know your discipline goals and give your pup a head start!



Playing outside for the first time between 5-6 wks.

WEEK 6 (36-42 days)

The indoor environment can now be as varied as your imagination will allow. Changing out objects daily gets the pups use to variety. Small, well constructed and safe “rubble” piles can be placed in one area of the pen. Make sure that anything heavy placed in the pen cannot be manipulated in a manner that it might fall on a pup. Stacking blocks of varying sizes side by side often works well.

The door of the crate can be added to allow the pups to be enclosed during times of rest. Most pups will identify the crate as a place for sleeping and will usually retire to it for naps, although the enrichment process prepares them to feel comfortable just about anywhere, as demonstrated in the picture to the right.

Weather allowing, the pups should now be spending short periods of time outside. Secured safely in a puppy pen, new enrichment toys can be introduced outside as well. Interactive hide and seek games can begin at this age that can progress into beginning puppy runaways.

In some climates, and depending on the size of the pups, it might even be acceptable to add small



Comfortable anywhere at 6 wks of age.

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

wading pans or pools of water. Allowing the puppies to interact with other appropriate adult dogs, who enjoy playing in water, will encourage the pups to investigate this new, wet environment.

This week also signals the beginning of more adventuresome trips around the outside world. Select destinations carefully, to provide enriching experiences and avoid environments that could put the pups in potential risk. Visiting friends or family in safe locations is a good option.



Playing with a stranger in a new location at 6 wks of age.

The first vet trip may occur during this week and should be made positive and safe in nature. Utilize treats and make the visit as fun as possible. Be sure that your vet and their technical assistants are thoughtful in their interactions with the puppies.

The dam should be spending much less time with the pups, only being allowed to enter for nursing at set times. Pups should be fed 4 times per day with the COME command always issued before the delivery of food. Basic training can continue,

and COME can be started individually in areas with low distraction, with high food reward given and lots of praise and play.

Pups may be interactive and willingly tug with toys and people at this age. They should be allowed to win most of the time. By utilizing two toys of the exact same type, teaching an OUT command can also begin. This is done by interactively offering the pup, with the first toy currently in his mouth, a the second, identical toy. Once the pup becomes interested in the second toy, being wiggled and drug around, he usually drops the first toy, and an OUT command can be issued. Through association, as this is repeated, many pups will learn to give the toy easily on command.



Beginning tug games at 6 wks.

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

NOTE: Many unknowing individuals obtain puppies at six weeks of age, as this is a standard method that has been followed for many years by some breeders. New information however, indicates that this is not the optimal age for a puppy to leave its mother or its littermates. Breeders that utilize enrichment programs often will not allow a pup to leave for their new home until they are between the ages of 9 to 12 weeks of age. This is because one of the most important critical periods occurs during this time span. This will be discussed in more detail below. It should also be noted that some important tests, such as preliminary eye exams, cannot be performed on pups until they are 9 wks old.

WEEK 7 (43-49 days)

At this time, puppies are taken outside daily to begin potty training. The dam is not allowed free access to the puppies. She is allowed into the puppy pen only for nursing, which will be reduced during the course of this week to once a day. On day 49, nursing will cease, to allow time for the dam's milk to dry up. Once this has occurred she will again be allowed access to the pups for playtime.

The pups are not to be separated from each other. This is a critical period in which pups learn how to interact with other dogs. During this period, pups learn important dog-dog manners, such as bite inhibition and how to read, interact with, and approach other dogs.

Safe visits to the outside world should continue. Socialization with other dogs, people, and other animals, such as cats, is key at this point. Do not allow them to chase small animals, such as cats or squirrels, we want a SAR dog to focus on humans or HR. Take the pups to locations that will give them positive experiences and encourage play in new environments. Friends and family are allowed to visit often and encouraged to interact and play with the pups. Play involves games with toys, puppy runaways, and tug games. New toys are

continually introduced and the pups are encouraged to explore and have fun during their outside time.



A very relaxed 7 wk old pup after an hour visitation at a local rehabilitation hospital.

PUPPY ENRICHMENT



The Volhard Puppy Aptitude Test is also historically given on the 49th day (Volhard, 2005). It is recommended that the test be performed in a novel area, free from distractions, and conducted by someone besides the primary caregiver (as discussed

in previous chapters). Testers should be careful not to frighten the pups in any way. Studies indicate puppy testing may not be effective as predictors of future behavior (see Chapter 2), however, these studies fail to take into account the experiences the pup has AFTER being homed. Negative reactions, such as sound or visual sensitivity, at this stage can also be noted and some individuals may attempt early behavioral modifications to lessen the pups reactions. Desensitization, done at an early age, can sometimes be successful. The example litter (shown in this chapter) were tested on day 49 and repeated on day 50. This allowed a trend to be observed in the pups reactions, since a one-time evaluation is not as accurate.

Simple nose games can be done to check for scenting aptitude, such as playing with a favorite toy and then setting it up on a chair or bench to see if the pup can locate it without visual stimulation.

Drive can be assessed by engaging the pup in play with a toy, then tossing the toy and gently restraining the pup for several seconds to observe his continued interest. Poor performance does not necessarily indicate a poor SAR

candidate since other factors, such as their level of tiredness, hunger, environmental distractions, etc. must be taken into account. Also consider that, if you have driven to a new place, the pup could be experiencing car sickness. A pup that readily engages, however, may indicate a pup with good potential drive.

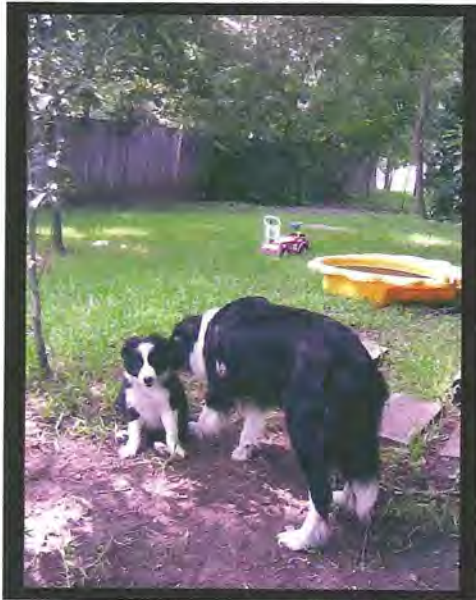


PUPPY ENRICHMENT

Historically, the 49th day represents the beginning of a critical period often referred to as a “fear period”. Remember, this is dynamic and may vary not only from litter to litter, but individual to individual; nevertheless, taking steps to safeguard against bad experiences while the pups are between 6 and 10 weeks of age is particularly important.

WEEK 8 (50-56 days)

If the dam’s milk has dried up sufficiently that she cannot be stimulated to lactate again, it is time to reintroduce her to the pups for play periods. The dam is very helpful in teaching the pups the difference between appropriate and inappropriate dog behavior. Continue to allow other appropriate adults to interact with the pups under supervision. Pups may be left out for longer periods of time in safe outdoor pens at this age, and in hotter regions, wading pools may provide not only fun, but cool relief.



Larger toys like jungle gyms, skateboards, and toy trucks can be introduced during this time, under supervision.

Pups may now be separated into individual crates for sleeping periods and rest periods. This will greatly assist in potty training and future owners of the pups will appreciate the head start. It may also be beneficial, especially if there are particularly active individuals, to rotate the pups time with each other, split the group up at times, and rotate different individuals out with one another. This will prevent one pup from being bullied by a pup experiencing a bolder period and may

prevent future fear problems. Since the potential for fearful events to severely impact the pups still exists at this age, caution should always be taken when presenting new situations or objects. Encourage the pups and make such events as fun as possible.

Pups may be introduced to swimming in deeper ponds during this week. Tolerant adult dogs that are good swimmers often encourage the pups to wade into the water’s edge.

PUPPY ENRICHMENT



**Playing
on the
jungle
gym at 8
wks.**

Some pups are born swimmers and take to the water immediately, while others may wade at the edges for some time before venturing in. Never force them; allow them to discover the water and its rewards in their own time. This is also a good time to test the pups for natural aptitudes associated with their breed. This litter, being Border Collies, was tested for their reaction to herd animals, such as goats.

Continue to reinforce behaviors that are desirable and ignore or correct those that are not. Just remember, always be fair and consistent. Learning to SIT or DOWN for rewards at this age can translate into nice passive alerts for some scent disciplines at a future date. If an aggressive alert is desired, such as a BARK or a JUMP, be careful not to squelch these behaviors at an early age, but rather encourage them and connect them, by positive reinforcement, to a command cue.



**Taking to the water like
a duck at 8 wks.**



**Sitting
for
treats.**

PUPPY ENRICHMENT

WEEK 9 – 12 (57-84 days)

If the puppy raiser has done their job right, getting a pup at this age will be a pleasure. The pups should be confident and bold and ready to face a new world with their new owners. While the pups have a good foundation, it is now up to the new owner to continue to expose the pup in a positive manner to novel stimuli and continue with good experiences and fun. Many handlers will begin immediately working on the foundations of their particular scent discipline, while others may work on other foundation work such as building a strong reward system through retrieving or tugs. Either method is appropriate with the right handler and dog.

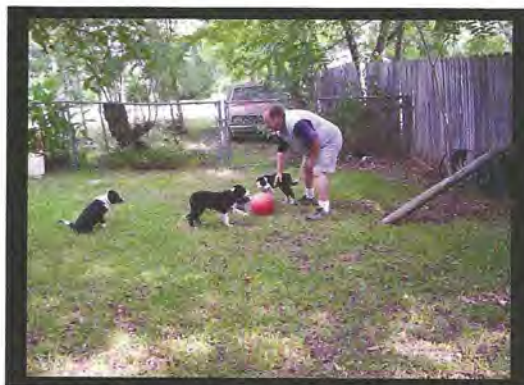


Enrolling in a credible puppy kindergarten class is highly recommended in order to continue socialization with other dogs along with training. Obedience training at this age should be positive and fun to avoid future issues with poisoned cues associated with scent targets.

A good start can give handlers a pup that, with continued work,

has the potential to be a great working partner for many years to come.

Learning and playing in new environments at 12 wks of age.



PUPDATE: At 8 months of age, three of the pups participated at Texas Task Force One's open disaster training in College Station, Texas. All three pups played on the new, very large rubble pile with ease and grace. Approaching one year of age, all six pups are still in training in their respective SAR disciplines with no signs of washing out. Two pups should be ready for their first round of certifications once they pass one year of age; the other four are close behind and closing the gap.

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GLOSSARY

Active alert – An energetic method for the dog to communicate to his handler that he's found the person or HR source, e.g. a bark, bump onto the handler, scratching/digging or other physical message from the dog to his handler. Often used by air-scent, avalanche, and disaster dog.

Adrenal exhaustion - The inability of adrenal glands to produce adrenaline to aid in short term stress relief after the dog has been in prolonged stressful situations.

Aggression – A canine social behavior used by the dog to gain control over its situation or environment; a defense mechanism. This behavior can prevent the safe handling of and working with the canine.

Alpha - In the context of canine behavior, constitutes the highest ranking (most dominant) member of a pack.

Anxiety - A chronic state of non-specific apprehension, arousal and vigilance.

Aptitude – An innate, acquired, learned or developed ability. A natural inclination or tendency towards competence in a specific skill set.

Atypical - Deviating from what is usual or common.

Aversive learning - Learning based on experiencing punishment, traumatic, or unpleasant events and attempting to avoid them in the future.

Breed-specific genetic make-up – Inheritable genes characteristic of a specific breed.

Cadaver - The entire remains of a deceased body (a whole corpse).

CERF - Canine Eye Registration Foundation; recognized database registration for eye evaluations.

Compulsion technique - A method of training a dog that relies on punishment.

Counter-conditioning - Training a dog to respond to a stimulus differently than is his current inclination. Used to modify unwanted behavioral responses.

Dam – Mother or female of a breeding pair of canines.

Defense/fight – See Drive.

GLOSSARY

Desensitization - Gradually presenting a fearful stimulus to a dog in a nonthreatening, subtle manner in conjunction with reward based - positive reinforcement. Used to modify unwanted behavioral responses and eradicate fear.

Dominant - The level of social status relative to other dogs, usually associated with higher pack standing. Such individuals within the pack control the distribution of resources.

Drive - The instinctive predisposition of a dog to exhibit certain behaviors.

Defense/fight - Canine's tendency to fight to protect itself, its pack or its prey.

Flight/self-preservation - Canine's tendency to flee to protect itself; a type of defense drive.

Food - Canine's desire to seek and obtain food.

Hunt - Canine's desire to hunt for prey that is not visible, using their nose.

Pack/social - Canine's desire to be a member of a pack: work with a handler.

Play/retrieve - Canine's desire to engage in play with others or to entertain itself.

Prey - Canine's desire to seek, capture and carry prey. Generally defined as visually initiated.

Dysplasia - The abnormal development or growth of bone, tissue, organs or cells.

Environmental enrichment - Exposing dogs to an environment diverse in textures, sounds, experiences, and other stimuli.

Fear - An immediate, self-protective response to events perceived as unknown, or potentially painful or injurious.

Fear period - A time in a puppy's life when he may experience fear when introduced to new situations and noises. Two periods are often accepted: 8 - 10 weeks and 6 - 14 months.

Fight or flight response - A hyperarousal or an acute stress response. Dogs reacting to a threat through stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, priming the animal for fighting or fleeing.

Flight/self-preservation drive- See Drive.

Food drive- See Drive.

Heritability - Character traits inherited by a dog from their parents/ancestors. Heritability analyses estimate the contributions of genetic and non-genetic factors to phenotypic variance (*observable characteristics or traits*) in a population.

HR - Human remains.

GLOSSARY

HRD - Human remains detection.

Hunt drive – See Drive.

Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis - The interactions among the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland in the brain and the adrenal glands on top of the kidneys. It controls reactions to stress and regulates digestion, the immune system, mood and emotions, sexuality, and energy storage and expenditure.

Hypothyroidism - A disease found in humans and animals as a result of an underactive thyroid. It causes, among other symptoms, fatigue, cold intolerance, and muscle and joint pain.

Imprinting - In general terms, socially bonding to the mother. In SAR terms, an intensive and rewarding exposure to a target scent that results in the dog's intense desire to find it.

Inhibitory techniques - Training methods used to stop a dog from behaving inappropriately.

Intra-specific aggression - Aggression between or among dogs.

Live-find dogs – Dogs used to search for and locate live persons.

Lure training - Using a reward to entice the dog into a wanted position or to exhibit a desired behavior.

Mission-ready - A dog that has passed all certifications or testing required by his organization prior to being utilized on an official search. Normally this requires approximately 2 years of training.

Negative reinforcement - Removing negative consequences when positive behavior is exhibited.

Nerve strength - The ability of a dog to adapt to and cope with stressful stimuli.

Neurobiological predisposition - A tendency of a dog to react in certain way because of his inherited brain physiology.

Neurological stimulation – Literally, to arouse or awaken the nervous system. In the context of puppy enrichment: enhancing development and brain function by touching and handling the puppy and providing varied temperatures and textures for them to experience.

GLOSSARY

Novice - A person new to a field or activity - a beginner.

NSDA - National Search Dog Alliance.

OFA - Orthopedic Foundation for Animals; recognized certifying body for hip and elbow evaluation.

Pack order or status - A social hierarchy, often based on the nuclear family unit. A dominant breeding (Alpha) pair, a group of subordinate (Beta) individuals, and the lowest ranking (Omega) dog. These descriptions are heavily based on research on captive wolves and cannot be extrapolated to wild wolf packs. In captivity, as with domestic dogs, dispersal of mature individuals is impossible, resulting in frequent aggressive hierarchic encounters.

Pack/social drive- See Drive.

Passive alert - A more subtle, inactive method for the dog to communicate to his handler that he's found the person or HR source, e.g. sitting, lying near or staring at the person or source. Often used by trailing, drug enforcement, and HRD dogs.

Pathophysiological reactions - Abnormal actions of a dog due to underlying disease or chronic condition.

PennHip - University of Pennsylvania Hip Improvement Program; recognized certifying body for hip and elbow evaluation.

Phobia - A fearful response in excess of what is appropriate for the situation and does not decrease naturally over time and exposure.

Physiological stress - The consequence of excess stimulation and a failure to adapt to change. A condition that results when a perceived interaction (real or imagined) stimulates a state of alarm during which adrenaline is produced in order to bring about the fight or flight response.

Play/retrieve drive – see Drive.

Positive reinforcement - Administering rewards when desired behavior is exhibited.

Predation - A biological interaction where one animal, a predator, kills and feeds on another animal, known as prey.

Prey Drive – See Drive.

Punishment - Administering negative consequences (physical or psychological) when undesired behavior is exhibited.

GLOSSARY

Puppy runaways - In some training regimes, the beginning step of live-find canine SAR training. Consists of having a subject run away from the dog and with a search command, the dog is released to run and find the subject.

Puppy enrichment - Raising puppies, from birth, in an environment full of different textures, tastes, experiences, etc.

Reactive behavior – A dog showing a strong response to a specific stimulus or set of circumstances in which it is placed.

Reactivity - A dog reacting negatively to a stimulus or a circumstance they encounter, can often manifest as aggression.

Rehabilitative therapy - Systematic actions taken to change a dog's behavior by encouraging positive reactions while reducing inappropriate ones.

Resilience - The ability of a dog to encounter an unfamiliar situation in which he may at first be cautious or afraid, but then to quickly recover and focus on his task.

SAR - Search and rescue.

Sharpness - The tendency of a dog to react with aggression.

Sire – Father or male of a breeding pair of canines.

Socialization – The act of exposing dogs to a variety of situations and stimuli in a non-threatening, supportive manner to ensure a positive experience and thus enhance the coping skills of the dog.

Stress – See physiological stress.

Submission - The condition of being compliant; usually associated with lower pack status.

Swimmer puppy syndrome – A puppy whose back legs drag and front legs are used to propel the pup. A condition caused by the pup always remaining prone on the stomach in the first days after a birth; a fatal condition.

Temperament – Behavioral traits; a manner of behaving or characteristically reacting.

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