

MARCH 2015

VOLUME 39, NUMBER 3

POLICE®

THE LAW ENFORCEMENT MAGAZINE

\$5.00



**FROM PUPPIES
TO POLICE DOGS:**
**ACQUIRING, TRAINING,
AND DEPLOYING
K-9s**

**ALPR SYSTEMS
IN ACTION**

**IMPROVING
E-CITATION TOOLS**

**WHAT TO DO
AT A PAWN
SHOP BURGLARY**

COMPUTERIZING K-9 SEARCH-AND-RESCUE

Volunteer K-9 groups that work with law enforcement to find missing persons use team management and incident command software to make their operations more efficient and effective.

JIM OKERBLOM



PHOTOS: ROUGH COAT PHOTOGRAPHY

Dogs and owners are typically trained in one or more of three disciplines: air scent, trailing, and locating human remains.

The call can come any time, but usually it comes in the middle of the night. When it does, the volunteer K-9 teams from the Chesapeake Search Dogs and Search One Rescue Team remain ready to respond—at any hour of the day—to assist public safety personnel in finding lost and missing persons.

For more than a decade, the Chesapeake Search Dogs organization has partnered with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to provide K-9 search services at no cost.

In the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the 36-member Search One Rescue Team has helped more than 120 government agencies locate lost or missing persons since 1983.

Both are comprised entirely of volunteers and their dogs.

RIGOROUS TRAINING

BUT EVEN THOUGH NO ONE IS BEING PAID FOR THEIR WORK ON THE TEAMS, both Search One and Chesapeake Search Dogs have demanding standards and rigorous training requirements. Dogs and owners are typically trained in one or more of three disciplines: air scent, trailing, and locating human remains.

"To get a dog and handler to operational certification takes about 18 months,"



says Dennis Ciesla, training coordinator for Chesapeake Search Dogs, which has seven operational dogs and handlers.

Donations pay for operating expenses, which include equipment and required insurance. Training is the responsibility of dog owners, who receive guidance and mentoring from more experienced members. But even after a dog and owner are deemed operational, they continue to spend many hours perfecting their skills. Chesapeake Search Dogs requires its members to attend an all-day training one Saturday per month, and there are two team trainings each week, one mandatory. "This is a very elite group," says Ed Thayer, 59, a fence contractor and Chesapeake's director of operations. "You are looking at between 400 and 900 hours a year that people put into this."

LOST PERSONS

THE MAJORITY of the search teams' missions involve lost children, people with diminished capacity due to conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia, overdue hikers and hunters, and the recovery of human remains. Sometimes there are happy endings. Sometimes there is tragedy.

Laura Hennig, 40, a volunteer with Search One who also serves as a sixth-grade teacher, recalls a time two years ago when a woman in her 70s, disoriented when she left the doctor's office, drove her car into a ditch near a lake. The woman called her daughter, saying she did not know where she was. When searchers found her car, the woman was nowhere around.

Ground teams, boats, and helicopters were deployed, but despite 24 hours of intensive searching, the woman remained missing. That's when the text message went out to Hennig and other members of Search One Rescue.

At the scene, Hennig and her German shepherd Gunner jumped ahead of Search One's air-scent dogs trying to get a bead on the woman's location. Although she saw no signs of anything, Hennig sent Gunner into the shallows at the edge of the lake.



COMPUTERIZING K-9 SEARCH-AND-RESCUE

"He kept turning his nose up, toward some really high reeds," she recalled. "He kept turning and turning and turning. Finally, I yelled, and out popped this lady. She was squatted down in the reeds and water. The boat drivers came over and said, 'We've been past this area a dozen times!' She wouldn't have been found had it not been for the dog."

Other cases do not end so happily. Den-

nis Ciesla's voice still tightens when he talks about his participation in a massive search in Salisbury, Md., five years ago with Chesapeake Search Dogs.

Just before Christmas in 2009, 11-year-old Sarah Foxwell was reported missing from her aunt's home. Ciesla and his dog Niko, a seven-year-old male German shepherd, were one of Chesapeake's teams that joined thousands of people



After searching, rescue teams can upload data stored on dogs' GPS collars to Mission Manager to replay their coverage.

searching for Sarah. Her body was found on Christmas Day by Law Enforcement Ground Team. A family friend was later convicted for her murder.

"The hardest one is always children," Ciesla says. "When that happens, it cuts across everything."


INTERESTING AND REWARDING

So why do these volunteers spend so much time and effort doing something that doesn't pay anything?

Volunteers often join these teams because they like the outdoors and want to find something to do with their dogs. Then both dogs and owners get hooked.

Ciesla, who has been involved with K-9 search and rescue for a dozen years, says the Chesapeake team is a second family. He enjoys helping other members reach their goals, and there's the personal satisfaction of being part of a highly skilled team. "If anything ever happened to my wife or children," he adds, "I would like to think someone would be there for them."

Thayer says, "There's a challenge to it. And it's kind of neat being able to be on the inside. We work very closely with law enforcement. They trust us explicitly with information that nobody else gets, because they know we keep our mouths shut. That makes it very interesting, and you feel privileged to be held in that regard."




Southern



Police Equipment

100% Woman Owned Small Business

L.E. Firearms HQ



Windham Weaponry







Call 4 Agency Pricing

National L.E. Distributor

New 9MM \$250 (IOP)

New Catalog

GSA Over 11,000 Products GS-07F-0273T

Like us on Facebook

Available

800.542.5243

Check Our Website for New Products, Specials, and Items up to 70% Off!

www.southernpoliceequipment.com

www.policemag.com/freeinfo/13625

SOFTWARE TOOLS

Chesapeake Search Dogs and Search One Rescue Team are just two of the volunteer K-9 search-and-rescue groups nationwide whose members spend countless hours training themselves and their dogs so they can be ready to assist local public safety agencies. Their job is complex, and it requires a lot of organization and management, which is why some of these groups are now using team management/incident management software tools.

Search One and Chesapeake Search Dogs both rely on cloud-based Mission Manager Incident Management software to help manage their personnel and equipment, and also enhance situational awareness in the field.

"I use it every single day. It is a huge part of what we do," says Search One's Hennig.

Mission Manager software plays a key role in the teams' training, searches, and debriefs. At the most basic level, Mission Manager is used for posting training schedules and allowing members to respond with their objectives so training can be coordinated. The Web-based software helps the team leaders develop mock scenarios, including checking in and checking out personnel, creating subject profiles, setting up task assignments, and mapping out the search areas.

"More importantly, we use it on searches," Hennig says. "It has Google Maps and Google Earth built into it, so we are able to measure a sector and track the search teams using real-time GPS. At the base, they can see where I'm walking; they can see where my dog is walking. If a call comes in about someone spotting something, they can see that and send me there.

"It has all of our radio communications, so if I'm calling base and telling you where I am, that's logged into Mission Manager. It's complete accountability. We are even able to use it to send out a missing person's flyer. It's amazing," Hennig adds.

Before deploying Mission Manager three years ago, Search One used a variety of tools to keep track of personnel, training, and missions, according to Jess Romero, director of search managers for Search One. "Now, with Mission Manager, everything is all in one place, and Search One is able to hit the ground running," says Romero.

The Chesapeake Search Dogs team uses Mission Manager not only for its team management and real-time communications but also for its automated reporting functions. After a night of searching, for instance, rescue teams can upload data stored on their dogs' GPS collars to Mission Manager and replay precisely where each dog has been.

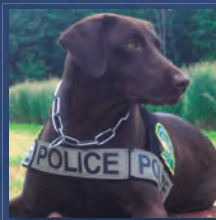
"You can bring up a coverage map,"

says Ed Thayer. "At the end of the night, it looks like a patchwork quilt, with everything in different colors. You can see what has been done, what hasn't been done, what might have been missed." 📍

Jim Okerblom is a freelance writer and former newspaper reporter.

Mission Manager
www.policemag.com/freeinfo/13360

K9 TRAINING YOU CAN COUNT ON



Established in 1984, the Alabama Canine Law Enforcement Officer's Training Center, Inc. has been responsible for the training of Police Service Dog Teams in 27 countries and 1,850 teams in the U.S.

- Four detection courses offered: Explosives, Narcotics, Cadaver and Accelerant
- Single and dual purpose police detection dogs offered
- Administrator Courses offered
- Housing for long distance students, offering a fully equipped gym
- Year-Round courses offered

SOME OF THE
DEPARTMENTS THAT
HAVE RECEIVED OUR
TRAINING ARE:

THE UNITED STATES
BORDER PATROL

ALABAMA STATE
TROOPERS

GEORGIA STATE
TROOPERS

THE CITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

THE CITY OF
WASHINGTON, D.C.

GEORGIA DEPT. OF
CORRECTIONS

SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE PATROL

NYPD/MTA DIVISION



For more information or to schedule a visit of the facility or a training course contact us today:

**Alabama Canine Law Enforcement
Officer's Training Center, Inc**

205-310-4164

www.alcanine.com

Manage Your Team & Missions

Securely in the Cloud



THE ULTIMATE INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Based on **Preparation, Readiness and Execution**, cloud-based Mission Manager enables teams to respond quicker and maintain situational awareness when every second counts. Highly secure and customizable, Mission Manager has supported more than 5,000 missions since 2011, including tactical callouts, campus security, CERT/SAR operations, training and public events. We're just a click away from supporting you too.

- Personnel & Asset Management
- Real-Time Communications
- Robust Mapping Capabilities
- Automated ICS Reporting Tools
- Shared Data Across Multiple Devices
- Affordable and User-Friendly



For more information or a demo call 619-457-6119 or email sales@missionmanager.com.
Sign up for 30-day free trial at www.missionmanager.com.
Enter the code POLICEMAG03 by March 1, 2015 to receive a 10% discount.