

\$5.95

Police **K9**

www.PoliceK-9Magazine.com

spring 2006

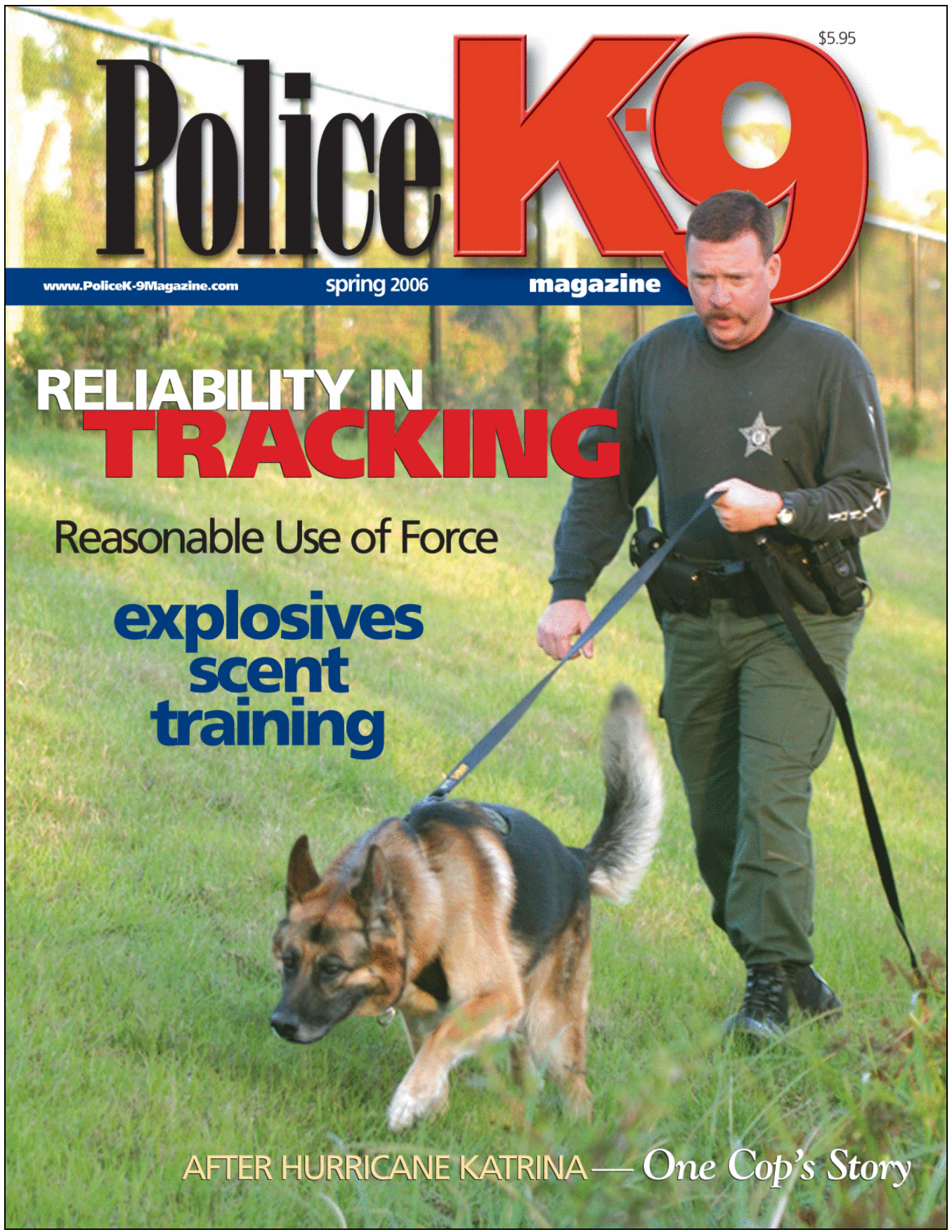
magazine

RELIABILITY IN **TRACKING**

Reasonable Use of Force

**explosives
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AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA — *One Cop's Story*



in my opinion

It's Not a Sport, It's a Job

Understanding the difference between sport training and K-9 training is critical to your success as a handler.

BY RODNEY SPICER

A police service dog's foundation training comes from a number of different working-dog sports from around the world. The main ones recognized today are KNPV, Schutzhund, IPO/CVV, Belgium Ring, French Ring, and Mondio Ring. Soon after becoming involved with working dogs, I realized that I needed to know my dog's history: his origin, his parentage, whether he is titled, and whether he comes from working or show lines. It's also important to understand the difference between sport training and K-9 training. This column reviews the major sport organizations and what they have contributed to foundation training, and compares them with police K-9.

Schutzhund

Schutzhund is a sport that originated in Germany. The word is literally translated as *protection dog*. The sport's three main titles are Sch H 1 (novice), Sch H 2, and Sch H 3 (master level). A Schutzhund title is obtained in three phases: tracking, obedience, and protection.

In the tracking phase, a tracklayer makes a trail, usually on a freshly plowed field or through vegetation. The trail will be anywhere from a few hundred yards to several hundred yards depending on the title to be obtained. The dog must follow the trail with a deep nose while the handler is at the end of a long line, 30 feet behind the dog. The dog will encounter small articles such as leather, wood, and carpet and indicate them to the handler and the judge. The team must achieve the minimum passing score of 70 points out of a possible 100.

Obedience in Sch H 1 consists of on- and off-leash heeling through a

group of people, gunfire, and commands such as "right turn," "left turn," "about turn," "sit," "heel," "down," "recall," "retrieve dumbbell," and a send out.

Sch H 3 obedience is the same except that it is performed off-leash and the "sit," "down," and "stand" commands are given while the handler is in motion. The dog retrieves a dumbbell over a 1-meter hurdle and a 6-foot, A-frame wall. The team must achieve a minimum passing score of 70 points out of 100.

Protection in Sch H 1 consists of the dog running around a blind and then being directed by the handler to another blind where a helper is wearing a sleeve. The dog must immediately alert the handler by barking at the helper. The handler retrieves the dog and has the helper step out of the blind. The handler searches the helper while the dog is lying down. The helper then escapes and the dog must stop him by grabbing his arm only. The dog will be given the command to "let go" and the helper re-attacks. The helper gives the dog two soft-stick hits and stands still. The handler retrieves the dog and goes downfield for a courage test.

In Sch H 3 protection trials, two helpers are used and the dog must run a pattern of five blinds directed by the handler, with the helper positioned in the sixth blind, standing still and

wearing a sleeve. The handler recalls the dog to his side and has the helper step out of the blind. The rest of the exercise is similar to Sch H 1, except that the second helper comes out from a blind to attack the handler. The helper is then transported to the judge.

In all three levels of protection, the team must receive a minimum passing score of 80 points out of 100.

Obedience and protection take place on a field approximately the size of a football field. The helper's equipment is an arm sleeve and a soft padded stick.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ACEK9.COM

■ **Above:** Unlike sport canines, police dogs are not scored on their performances, but failure to do their jobs can put their lives and those of their human partners at risk.

IPO

International Prüfungs Ordnung, or International Working Test (IPO), is a sport developed by the *Fédération Cynologique Internationale* (FCI), also known as the World Canine Organisation. It is almost identical to Schutzhund; its titles are IPO 1, IPO 2, and IPO 3.

The following titles are used in specific countries. Italy: Brevetto 1, 2, and 3. Yugoslavia: CAB 1, 2, and 3. Hungary: SZL 1, 2, and 3. Czech Republic: CVV 1, 2, and 3. Denmark: BHP 1, 2, and 3. The Netherlands: VH 1, 2, and 3. Those are all Schutzhund titles; they have the same three phases and use the same equipment. The judges are quite critical of the dog's grip; they want to see a full, deep grip. All trials take place at a training field or stadium.

KNPV

Koninklijke Nederlandse Politiehond Vereniging (KNPV) is a sport developed by the Royal Dutch Police Dog Association. KNPV working-dog titles/certifications are police dog 1 (PH1), police dog 2 (PH2), and object guard.

KNPV obedience exercises are heeling on- and off-leash, "right turn," "left turn," "sit," "down," "recall," object retrieval, a swim across a canal and return on command, heeling beside a bicycle, food refusal, and gunfire. KNPV obstacles are a 1-meter hedge jump, a 2.25-meter ditch jump, and a 1.75-meter wall jump.

KNPV protection consists of an object guard, searching for a person in the woods, a call off, transport of a prisoner, a long attack in which the dog is struck with a stick before the attack, a recall from a long attack, an attack with gunfire, and a long attack to stop a person fleeing on a bicycle. Tracking is not tested.

Trials and certifications take place only in The Netherlands. The decoys wear bite suits and carry reed sticks. The judges are not critical of the fullness of the dog's grip. All certifications take place at a training

field or stadium. The team performs one exercise or scenario at a time.

Belgium Ring

Belgium Ring is a sport; its three titles are CAT 3 (entry level), CAT 2, and CAT 1 (advanced level). The obedience exercises are some of the most demanding of all working-dog sports. The decoy wears a bite suit and tries to distract the dog during the entire routine.

Obedience consists of heeling on- and off-leash, food refusal, "down," "sit," "stand up," retrieving an object, scent discrimination, and a send-away. Obstacles are a 2-meter wall, a fixed-hedge jump, a jump over a large pit, and a jump over a large hedge with a pit.

Protection exercises are guarding an object, handler attack, guarding the handler, gunfire, search with transport, a call-off, search of a training field with guard-and-bark, and a muzzle exercise. Tracking is not tested.

Bite suits, bamboo clatter sticks, and muzzles are the equipment used. Also, the dog can bite only the forearm and on the legs from the knee down. The judges are very critical of the grip and want to see a full, deep grip. All trials and exercises are held at a training field and performed simultaneously. The routine can take 30 minutes.

French Ring

French Ring is a sport in which the main titles are Ring 1 (entry level), Ring 2, and Ring 3 (most advanced). The obedience exercises are on- and off-leash and consist of "heel" with a muzzle, "right turn," "left turn," "sit," "down," "stand," scent discrimination, food refusal, a send away, object retrieval, and a recall. Obstacles include a long jump over a 4.5-meters-long ditch, a 1.2-meters-tall hurdle, and a 2.3-meters-tall wall jump. Tracking is not tested.

Protection consists of a courage test, fleeing apprehension, a courage test with gunfire, a call-off, handler protection, search of a training field with guard-and-bark, and an object



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*— Eric Oden, senior K-9 handler,
Brea (CA) Police Department*

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■ **Left:** Obedience exercises in Belgium Ring are quite demanding; the decoy attempts to distract the dog throughout the competition routine. Police service dogs, however, face a multitude of distractions every moment of every working day.

PHOTOGRAPHER: RODNEY SPICER

During a 2 a.m. building search, no one is going to run out of a blind cracking a whip and waving a bite sleeve.

guard. The judges are not critical of the fullness of the grip. The trial takes place on a training field. A bite suit, a muzzle, and bamboo clatter sticks are the equipment used. All exercises are conducted simultaneously and a routine can take 30 minutes.

Mondio Ring

Mondio Ring is a sport in which teams from Schutzhund, KNPV, Belgium Ring, and French Ring can all compete. Most countries that use working dogs recognize the Mondio Ring titles. The three main titles are MR 1 (entry level), MR 2, and MR 3 (most advanced). All levels are off-leash using no collar.

Obedience is determined by the judge and consist of off-leash heeling, "sit," "down," "stand," scent discrimination, a send-out, a retrieval, "right turn," and "left turn." During obedience testing, one or two decoys wear bite suits and try to distract the dog by throwing balls, running in circles around the dog, and making noises. Food is placed on the field and, when he is in a "down" position, the decoys throw food to the dog, which must ignore all those distractions.

Mondio Ring obedience is the most demanding of all working-dog sports. Tracking is not tested. Obstacles are a hurdle, a 2.1-meter wall jump, and a 3.5-meter long jump.

Protection consists of a courage test, a fleeing apprehension, handler protection, search of a training field with guard-and-bark, a call-off, and an object guard. The decoys use bite suits, bamboo clatter sticks, and other accessories. The trials take place at a training field and the judge is not critical of the fullness of the dog's grip.

A Mondio Ring routine has 17 exercises that run simultaneously for as long as 30 minutes.

Police K-9

Police K-9 is not a sport, it is a job, and I can assure you that during a 2 a.m. building search no one is going to run out of a blind cracking a whip and waving a bite sleeve in the air. Police K-9s search for articles such as weapons, clothing, purses, and wallets. Those searches are not conducted on a training field: they take place in a backyard or under a house; in an alley, woods, or parking lot; or on a freeway.

Police K-9 obedience is on- and off-leash and takes place in all types of environments with all kinds of distractions. Narcotics- and explosives-detection searches can be in the tidiest or most cluttered environments. They may occur in a car or in a junkyard. Moreover, the K-9 can encounter other animals, barking dogs, or even dogs in heat. In an area search, a team may traverse thick brush or poison oak in the

middle of the night or in the rain. In a building search, the K-9 may be sent through a dark crawlspace under a house and then be hoisted into the attic to make sure that it is clear. He may even have to enter a house as officers simultaneously use a light-sound diversionary device and tear gas. A police K-9 may be used in a pursuit that ends in a block-long, yard-to-yard search and then be taken to an elementary school where 100 children are yelling out his name and wanting to pet him.

Handler protection is real. Real bad guys don't wear bite sleeves, wave soft padded sticks, and say "hey, hey." They have real guns, knives, bats, and anything else they can use to cause you and your K-9 harm. When a bad guy grabs the handler or K-9, he means business and will do whatever he can to get away. Police K-9 is not a sport, it's a job that accepts only the best candidates — the ones that have true courage and desire. The training is extremely challenging, demanding, and rewarding. ■



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