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## Presidents Update:

With Christmas fast approaching the SDA still has a number of major events to complete. Over the next 10 weeks there will be an Operational Assessment, Northern Regional Training Weekend and an Operational Handlers Weekend. If you have any questions about any of these events or training in general then don't hesitate to contact The National Trainer, Brenda Woolley.

I would also like to emphasize that if you have any queries or comments that you think the committee should be aware of then contact the SDA Coordinator in the first instance, these queries can then be discussed and if needed added to the agenda for the next MANCOM meeting.

The INSARG certification is progressing and with procedures and documentation being reviewed a number of you have asked how this will affect SDA members. At this stage the Fire Service have not advised the SDA officially of how this will affect us what I can tell you is this,

- Training records need to be updated regularly, including personal training records. (The SDA is working on a new Log book at present)
- PCA testing for all support staff
- Re-Application for USAR Support Staff Members including Current Dog Handlers
- USAR Cat 2 and 72 hour exercise to be held within the next 6 months, this will include a Support Course.
- Structural Awareness and confined space course to be developed for Dog Handlers

There will be a further update sent out before Christmas.

Tim Drennan  
NZ USAR Search Dog Association  
President



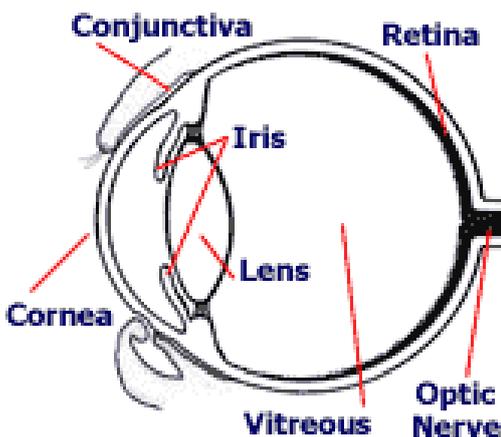
# Vet Corner

A regular column by  
Jenny Waters, USAR Vet Evaluator

## Eye Problems

The canine (or any mammalian) eye is an incredibly complex and specialised organ. All its different parts work together to provide detailed information to the brain. It is impossible to imagine a search dog functioning without the input of its eyes.

But *because* of its complexity, the canine eye is also extremely vulnerable and fragile. Anything that affects your dog's eyes needs to be taken seriously. Before we go any further, I want to emphasise one point. If you think your dog has any sort of eye problem, *visit your vet!* It may be nothing, but if it isn't, *doing* nothing may mean your dog's sight is compromised beyond salvage.



So what are the common symptoms of eye problems?

- Squinting/ excessive blinking
- Rubbing at the eyes or rubbing the face on the floor
- Excessive tear production
- Thick coloured discharge
- Pain (*don't touch me!*) or in appetite
- Redness in or around the eye
- Uneven pupils, or pupils that don't respond to changes in light levels
- Bulging or shrunken eyes
- Opacity

And what do they indicate?

### Foreign body (something in my eye...)

Anything from a bit of dust to a chunk of wood is very irritating, especially if it touches the cornea. It will produce blinking, tearing, rubbing and redness, and lead to further problems such as corneal ulceration or conjunctivitis if not treated.

If you suspect a foreign body, try flushing the eye with copious amounts of saline (I know you know how!) but if the symptoms don't resolve quickly, go to your vet.

## Conjunctivitis

This is a general term for inflammation of the tissues lining the eyelids and covering the white of the eye. It may be the result of irritation from a foreign body or contaminant like concrete dust, or of a bacterial or viral infection.

The white of the eye will appear red, there may be lots of tear production or a thick yellow/green discharge, and it will probably be painful.



## Corneal ulcer

The clear portion of the front of the eye is very susceptible to injury and infection. If it is damaged, a corneal ulcer can develop. These may progress with frightening speed (a “melting ulcer”) until the ulcer penetrates the full thickness of the cornea. In some cases the eye may actually rupture. The symptoms are the same as for foreign bodies and conjunctivitis, but may also include cloudiness of the cornea. Don't try and differentiate – just get your dog to your vet.



## *Less common conditions include:*

### Acute glaucoma

A sudden increase in the pressure inside the eyeball. The eye will be painful, red and with a dilated pupil. This needs urgent treatment to save the sight in the eye.



### Uveitis

This is inflammation or infection inside the eye, sometimes the result of disease. Penetrating injuries can also cause uveitis. The eye will be red, painful and runny, with a small pupil and possibly a prominent third eyelid. So who you gonna call?

## Cataracts

This is a condition where the lens inside the eye becomes opaque, so light can't reach the retina (and therefore the brain) and the eye looks cloudy. It can be a normal aging process, or be the result of trauma. It is also a very common symptom of advanced diabetes in dogs.



## Nuclear Sclerosis

Cataracts can be confused with nuclear sclerosis, which is the gradual clouding of the lens seen in older dogs. This isn't thought to affect their sight.



## Progressive Retinal Atrophy

This is a well-known inherited problem in some breeds, where the retina at the back of the eye gradually "wastes away", resulting in blindness. It can, however, occur in any dog. In the early stages, the dog loses night vision. As the onset is gradual and the dogs adapt, many owners don't realise their dog is going blind until they notice dilated pupils, particularly in a bright light. There is no treatment.



## Inherited/Anatomical problems

There are a number of eye problems in dogs that arise from the shape of the eyelids or from abnormal eyelashes. Most of these should be picked up as puppies or young dogs, and many are breed-related.



Entropion (Turned-in eyelid)



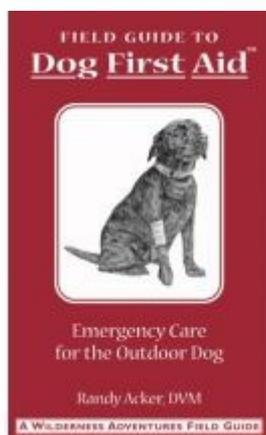
Ectropion (Turned-out)



Cherry Eye

## Eyelid injuries

The function of the eyelids is to protect the eyes from injury and environmental insult, and to distribute the tear film across the eyeball. Injuries to the eyelids that leave them scarred or disfigured will eventually lead to damage to the eyes. It's very important to get eyelid injuries assessed and carefully repaired. I can't emphasise enough how important it is to seek veterinary attention if there is anything wrong with your dogs eyes. Eye conditions can "go bad" quickly, and often beyond the point of no return.



Remember the SDA Library has The Field Guide to Dog First Aid

by Randy Acker

# Training Tips

## New dogs initial assessment

In the past, a dog's initial assessment has been to put the dog through a few exercises to check that it has sufficient drive to enter into the NZ USAR Search Dog National Training Programme. Although the exercises used were basically the same for each dog, there was no real formal assessment for this process. It was based more on gut feeling than a proper marking system.

With the ever increasing importance of getting the *right* dog for the job, this process will now be made more formal and along the lines of what the police and other agencies use for their dog recruitments. The police let SDA look at their dog initial assessment format, which was very similar to how we were doing the checks, so with only a few minor changes (*in line more with search dogs than police dogs*), we have come up with a formal score system that takes us through 5 different drives.





### **Retrieve Drive**

This looks at the speed and intensity at which the dog runs to get its toy, and is repeated 5–10 times.

### **Hunt Drive**

This looks at the intensity and time a dog will search for a hidden toy.

### **Prey drive**

This looks at the intensity to chase a moving person with a toy, the intensity of behaviour and persistence.

### **Object Drive**

This looks at the desire of the dog to keep the toy once it has obtained it. A tug of war and/or desire to retain possession of it.

### **Game drive**

This looks at the dogs desire to redirect its attention from one goal to another, ie from the *dead* toy it is holding to a *live* toy produced.

These exercises are each given a score from 1–5, and a suitable dog will need to score at least 20 out of 25. The dog assessed will need to be at least 8 months of age.

If the dog gets through these exercises it will be a great start, and further down the training track when things get a bit harder, these dogs should have the goods to make it through, as they have shown they did have the right drives for the job. With this new system the handlers will also receive a copy of the initial assessment paper work to put into their training log books.

# Foundation Training Weekend 2012

Anne Babbage

It was a beautiful day for travelling – the sun was shining and the ranges both north and south of Palmerston North had a considerable coating of snow on the higher levels. There was much anticipation regarding this trip to Christchurch as our new dogs were taking their first flight, would be staying in a vehicle for several days and be actually training with other dogs – a whole new experience for them. How would they cope? The trip didn't start well as the flight was delayed for over an hour, the dogs barked as soon as they were loaded and all the passengers could hear them but no-one seemed to mind. The flight attendant had to yell as she read the safety procedures and the barking continued all the way to Christchurch.

The hire van at Christchurch was another adventure in itself. I couldn't start it firstly and had to ask for help, couldn't find how to turn the lights on and asked a pedestrian who was nearly run over as he very kindly helped us and then asked a taxi driver where reverse was. He couldn't work it out but, luckily, there was a manual in the glove-box so Lois was able to find the instructions. By that time we were very late for the Friday night meeting and arrived at the





Woolston Fire Station just in time to hear most of Bernie Rush's update on USAR developments. Then snatched a bite of pizza left for us and Janelle gave a power point presentation on the formation of the NZ USAR SDA. Back to our lodgings, took the dogs to the nearby park for a stretch and to bed at about 11 p.m. after a long girlie catch-up with Donna and Wendy.

On Saturday morning Lois and I took the dogs for a long walk before we all met at Woolston again for a presentation by Brenda on general training methods/tips while Janelle shopped for morning tea and lunch provisions for our group and the USAR engineers who were also having a training weekend. This was followed by a session of obedience training which covered basic heeling, waits, recalls, stays and stopping on recall. At one stage Brenda had Jake on a long lead and demonstrated how to begin the stop on recall training with the wait signal and reward if performed correctly. I thoroughly enjoyed this as it was a chance for Jake and Hurley to participate in a group session. There were lots of dogs and handlers. Among them were Donna and Jet, Wendy with Rosco, Lois with Hurley, Ben with Rookie, and myself with Jake. Brenda with a new potential VR dog called Luna and Tim with Meg. It took a while for the dogs to settle down but they all performed very well.

After a sumptuous lunch Jenny Waters gave a talk and presentation on veterinary care/diseases/injuries which was very interesting. Then, over to the agility compound for the ladders and tunnels etc. with Janelle enticing the dogs to negotiate the metro box.

All the dogs enjoyed being able to stretch their legs and most were able to find Janelle, with some help. I was pleased with Jake as he concentrated on the agility and wasn't distracted by the other dogs taking turns in the metro box or the totally new surroundings. He loves agility, although he doesn't much enjoy going at a controlled pace. He also found Janelle OK too and barked loudly which was pleasing and came back down to me at the entrance as well. I think the "babies" (as Brenda calls them) did very well and we, as handlers also gained some more training knowledge.

On Saturday night we four "girls" went to the local Working Men's Club for a slap-up meal as we have done previously. The roast dinners are excellent.

Sunday morning the co-ordinators were back to the pound by 8am for a meeting and we joined in at 8.30 to discuss the program for the day and Brenda gave some tips on direction training. Then it was over to the directions compound to put the ideas into practice. Was great to see the dogs enjoy having us run with them to each direction, then treat them and throw a ball when they completed the last direction. They were probably laughing at us as we huffed and puffed our way around. Lois' girly throw was a sight to behold as the ball nearly landed in Brenda's mouth, instead of Hurley's



After each dog/handler finished with the directions they moved to the bark box exercise. Several of the young dogs weren't sure which one was the bark box, as the area does have a lot of materials and equipment in it, so they did a small search to determine where the subject was hidden. Jake ate an unknown object before barking at Linda in the box. Obviously I should have fed him more breakfast. All the dogs seemed to enjoy the excitement of the exercise. Rosco and Jet had another turn at the metro box and improved on their performance from the previous day.

When we had all finished the exercise we departed for the Brewery to sample the fine coffee/hot chocolate/tea and brunch. For the ones flying home in the afternoon this would be our lunch and dinner so we made the most of it.

We then drove to Pound Road for rubble training. Janelle and Tim were the subjects for the pop-up exercise for the young dogs. They all negotiated the rubble well and barked at the subjects. Then the operational dogs plus Rosie were put through their paces on a second pile, finding some completely hidden subjects. It was a joy to watch and hope we can achieve the same goals in the future. Donna and Wendy had to leave soon after for their flight home so they and their dogs had a further search on the first pile before departing. Lois and I were next to leave so also managed to squeeze in another search. Our dogs also had no problems in finding the subjects and again barking.

We said our goodbyes and thanks and all left in a convoy. Lois and I took our dogs to the usual small park near the airport for a last walk and toilet before driving to the airport. Our departure was not straightforward either. Hurley, being so tall, fits into a very large flight crate which doesn't fit on the luggage trolleys well. Balance is not assured and one needs to steady it constantly. As Lois was being checked in I held Hurley's crate and let go of Jake's crate. Of course, Jake changed position and his crate fell off the trolley, ending up on its side. Who should be our knight in shining armour? Craig, who was at the airport to take a flight for work, made his appearance just as Jake fell off. We were so glad to see him. He accompanied us and dogs to the luggage storage area, helping with the gear. We had quite a long catch-up before we made our way to our separate departure areas. Although both dogs had had a big weekend they barked again all the way home. Perhaps they were telling the passengers about their experiences.

I, personally, enjoyed the weekend immensely and again learned a great deal about dogs, their training and my handling. Hopefully I can put it all together and become operational. Thank you again to the rest of the members and subjects who helped – southern, northern and central.

# Regional Training Weekend Northern

Donna Thomas

## Jet and “Stonehenge”

The massive rubble pile at the Auckland Airport, aka Stonehenge, was the venue for the first day of Northern regional training in September. With diggers and crushing machinery in use at one end of the pile the noise, dust and vibrations added to the training experience. Jet had been to the pile once before in the very early days of his training, however we had only trained on the edge of the pile to avoid freaking him out. So the days training was definitely going to be a challenge for him.

While the experienced dogs, Keepa, Que, Sarge and Joe jumped straight into searches, the focus for Jet early on in the day was to have a positive and fun experience on this new and challenging pile. Four super excited and irresistible handlers and subjects were selected to pop out from the corners of the pile. Jet responded well and after initial hesitation, gathered confidence and was away in his normal speedy manner… followed by a not so speedy handler.

After two pop-up sessions, we progressed to a proper search and voila the Stonehenge pile was conquered by Jet, locating and altering perfectly on 2 subjects.

Thanks to the team in helping us to achieve this great result.



# In The Media

Last month, the Southern dog team went into the red zone to do some media work for TV 1, TV 3 and The Press. The main purpose of this was to show the dogs training hard at their search work with some of the local USAR Technicians. Search Cameras and Listening devices were also in action around the old Orion site.

As it was the dogs first day back at training after the month of August off, they were extremely keen and focused for getting their toys back to tug. They all did a great job, and didn't mind the camera crews, reporters, demolition workers, diggers, and task force technicians, as they sourced, scented and found the "missing person" on site.

Thanks to CERES New Zealand for allowing us access to this site.



# Current Operational Teams

Handler	Canine	City	Result
Brenda Woolley	Boss	Christchurch	Advanced Operational
Brenda Woolley	Easy	Christchurch	Advanced Operational
Brenda Woolley	Keepa	Christchurch	Advanced Operational
Linda Pike	Buk	Christchurch	Advanced Operational
Tim Drennan	Boo!	Christchurch	Advanced Operational
Janelle Mackie	Cairo	Christchurch	Advanced Operational
Graham Joseph	Tala	Christchurch	Advanced Operational
Malcolm Percy	Sarge	Auckland	Operational



## Upcoming Events:

Date	Event	Venue
3 – 4 November	Central Regional Training	Central
25 November	Operational Assessment	Southern
7 – 9 December	Operational Handlers Weekend	Southern
TBC (February)	National Training Weekend	Northern

The NZ USAR Search Dog Association would like to acknowledge the on going Support of;



[www.usardogs.org.nz](http://www.usardogs.org.nz)