



October 2011

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Presidents Update:

It is coming up a year since I took on the role of USAR SDA President, and what a year it has been. The main "feature" of the year has obviously been the response and recovery from the devastating February earthquake. The edition of PawPrint dedicated to our part in this event has been well received locally, nationally and internationally. I think stakeholder and public awareness of USAR Search Dogs is higher than ever and while this is fantastic, responding to website enquiries, media and other requests for information is a large amount of work which needs to be balanced against the core purpose of the USAR SDA, - training dogs to operational level. I am pleased to welcome onboard Rochelle Beattie as the Association Coordinator and you can read more about her skills on the following pages, and hope you agree she has some skills sets which I think will be very valuable in the time ahead. I also think it is important to acknowledge all the other things we have collectively achieved in the time since February:

- Held a National Training Weekend
- Regional Training Weekends in each centre
- AGM completed
- Dog insurance for operational dogs
- A library for all members
- A Facebook page established

There is also plenty on the horizon for future months, and as always I am happy to discuss any issues with members, with my emphasis being on finding a positive way forward.

Tim



Meet Rochelle, new SDA Coordinator

Allow Me To Introduce Myself...

Home/Personal

Born and bred in Christchurch and have one grown up daughter who is living and working in Brisbane. That makes me home alone with Bella (daughters cat), Sugar my cat and Stella who is a Bichon cross kindly left in my care when my daughters friend went back to Malaysia. Isn't that just typical of kids!

I work for the Christchurch City Council as senior administrator based at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Bromley and have been in this position for the last 10 years. This position has no two days the same as it is a varied role and can bring with it many daily challenges –but I love it.



Relevant Previous Experience

For 5 years I held the post of Secretary/Treasurer for the Richmond Working Men's Club Indoor Target Shooting Section and was instrumental in bringing about quite a few changes in conjunction with a drive for introducing new members and making awareness of the sections activities. When I stood down from the position the rifle section had come a long way over that time increasing membership and pulling in some young blood trying something they had probably never thought of doing before. The club was by then using a more professional approach to their administrative duties and record keeping and was definitely in a stronger position at competition level.

The Future

I have been looking for something useful to do over the past 2 years and when I found out the SDA was looking for a new association coordinator I didn't hesitate in putting my name forward.

I look forward to getting to know and work with you all in the future and especially putting faces to names and of course names to dogs (and maybe their pull toys one day).

The Rewards

Its one way to make a bunch of whole new friends both human and K9 and as for others, I am sure there will be many.

I think you all do a great job and are so committed to your roles and dogs and of course all that hard work was put to the real test recently so it all paid off. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity of working with you all.

Regards

Rochelle

Central Training Weekend- September 2011

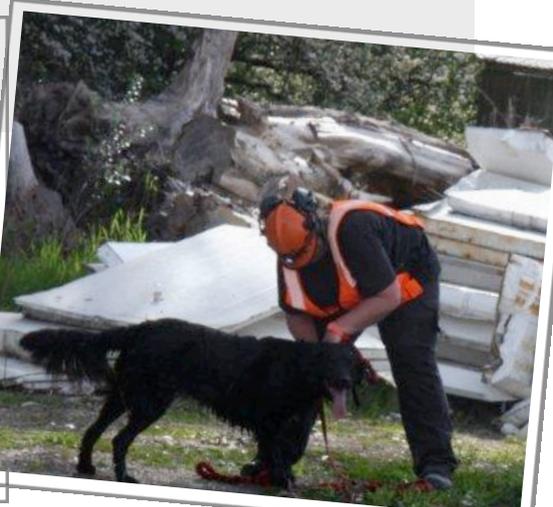
The Central Search Dog Regional training weekend was invaded on both fronts by the Southern search dog teams of Brenda (Boss), Linda (Buk), Janelle (Cairo) and Tim (Boo!); and the Northern search dog teams of Kirsti (Tommy) and Donna (Benny). This was to show some of the newer members of Central, a cross section of different dogs at operational or near operational standard. It was also an opportunity for the regional training co-ordinators to get together for a meeting with the National Trainer and the SDA President. This took place on the Saturday night as Friday night had us all watching the opening ceremony of the Rugby World Cup and the first game of the competition between New Zealand and Tonga.

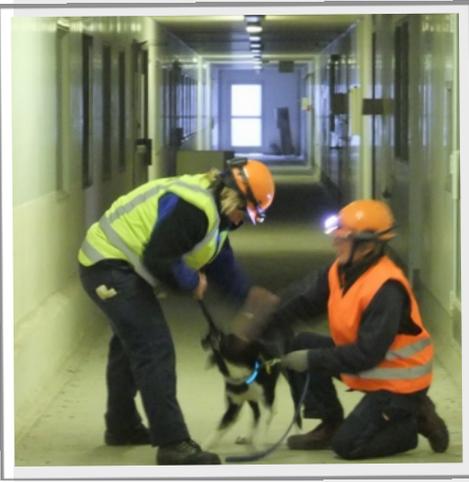
Saturday morning had us at the Higgins Site, and as a couple of the central teams went through some progress checks, the others made up four hides within the good sized rubble pile that was available to us. The rubble scenario showed all teams successfully completing the task of finding the four subjects, with 4-5 people sitting watching on top (as people distractions). This scenario showed how dogs can work quite differently from each other, yet finish with the same result of four subjects found. Some of the dogs work faster over the pile, but could end up spending more time on it as their quickness could take them too fast, past part of a scent cone. It showed that some dogs work the scent around the hide to make sure of the strongest part to indicate on, some try to find a way to get into the hide, and others will just bark as soon as they get there. The exercise showed handlers giving their dogs direction to move them over the pile, and it was set up with 2 of the subjects rewarding after a specified number of barks, while the other 2 rewarded on the handlers command. This gives a good variety on the times when the reward will "appear" out of the hides for the dogs. The trainee dogs had a pop-up and a callout on this pile, still with a good number of *people distractions* watching.

A bark box exercise was set up with 3 wheelie bins in a row, and the subject in the middle one. As it was set up very close to the rubble pile, it became an interesting and fun exercise for the handlers to stop their dogs running to the rubble and getting them over to the bins – almost an emergency stop going straight to directions, then to bark box. Three progress check elements combined into one – great stuff!

Saturday afternoon and we were in a small and messy (only in the sense there were lots of places to hide) industrial yard with a small concrete pile in centre that had a digger sitting strategically on top. The operational/near operational dogs were given a 3 subject search. 2 were placed in bins (one with scent coming out and pooling along a concrete wall) and 1 high up in the digger. A good exercise in letting the dogs work the scent and pinpoint where it was coming from. Also a good exercise in controlling the dogs through the numerous mazes of all sorts of metals/girders/bins/concrete and vehicles that were all jammed into this small yard. One safety aspect of this yard that handlers had to be aware of was a working railway line that boarded the back boundary, the tracks less than a couple of metres higher than the yard itself and with no boundary fence.

The trainee dogs had two pop-ups in this yard. It was fun watching the digger pop-out as the subject was asked to lean out and to keep calling the dogs until they reached the ridge, then "pop back" into hiding at that exact moment. This excited the dogs so they wanted to get up as close as possible to the subject and kept their focus and interest, so that they performed excellent indications. Great timing from the subject (Ann). The VERT team came to catch up with the search dog teams, and watched some of the dogs working. They were so helpful to the teams during the Christchurch Earthquake February 2011 deployment, so it was great to see them again.





Sunday morning had us heading to the Longburn site, but instead of the usual hunting grounds, we had available to us, a disused bathroom/toilet block of basement, ground and an upper floor.

First exercise was outside the building as the trainee dogs did a “C” runaway/ search. This involved the subject running to a distant point while the dog is watching, then as the dog is turned around; the subject comes back and hides down at approximately half of the original distance. With the wind blowing the subjects scent across the path that the dog will be running (as he/ she still thinks the subject is at the point last seen), the dog, if using his nose will hit the scent cone, screech on his brakes and turn and follow the scent to subject and indicate. For this exercise to work well, we needed a good consistent wind. (Would be fair to say, the demo’s didn’t go quite as good as expected!). We used some large black bins to hide behind in this exercise

and it was interesting that some dogs found these to be distracting/ disconcerting. It would have been useful to know what they had been used for in the past. If a dog is “worried” by something you are using for a hide or even just searching around, let them have a good calm look and smell, then try a real fun runaway to it – may be it is all it needs for the dog to never worry about it again.

Operational and near operational dogs had a 3 subject search in the building. Upstairs, one subject was in the middle toilet of a six block. Toilets are great search areas for the dogs; the smell is usually bad and musty especially with old disused ones. Most have shiny slippery floors, and they have to pinpoint which door the subject is behind. Subject rewarding is easy, without the dog being able (usually!) to get in. The other subject on this floor was behind an upturned chair in the corner of an empty room. As scent usually goes to the windows, (flows from warmer to cooler air), the dogs are likely to be working the scent on the side of the room the windows are, not “seeing” the only article in the room the subject could be hiding behind. If the dog starts indicating on the strongest scent by the window, the handler can move the dog around the boundaries of the room to pinpoint the subject. On starting the search, some of the handlers would let their dogs range freely down the corridor firstly on a hasty search to see if they caught any scent straight away. Once the dog returned, they would start their systematic search, room by room.

It is always a great opportunity for training when a building has a basement or underground area. This one was great; was dark, had dirt, pigeon poo, old water, lots of pipes, and to make it more challenging, the handlers were only allowed down one side of it, so had to make sure their dogs cleared the areas in which they could not go. It was interesting to see the dogs that went into the room next to where the subject was, start working the scent along the concrete wall that separated the two. On looking up, there were a couple of open pipes that went from the subjects side to this one. One of the dogs indicated fully in this room and the others came out and worked to the wire gate of the subjects room and indicated there. The trainee dogs did a series of pop-outs in the basement and the ground floor corridor.

The national trainer showed a demonstration of heelwork with her dog Boss, and then showed us how to get a young dogs attention for heeling. We did a group heelwork session, with some weaving in and out between the others. There was an aggression issue between a few “high energy” dogs, and the national trainer said that this had to be managed, and must not become a constant and continual problem, with it affecting their search work in any way. If not managed, the dog may have to be removed from the national program. We ended the session with a stay exercise, and an emergency stop.

Mitchell Brown came out to see us and we finished the regional training weekend with a discussion that covered a number of topics from the role of the SDA, the role of the regional training co-ordinators, progress checks, training issues and management of dogs.

Thanks so much to the teams of the central region for a great training weekend, excellent venues, and absolutely amazing home cooking and heaps of it. Looking forward to you hosting the nationals next year.

Linda Pike





Vet Corner

A regular column by
Jenny Waters, USAR Vet Evaluator



Water is Life...

We all know we have to drink fluids to stay hydrated, and perform well. That's common sense. And we've seen the ads – electrolytes, isotonic, hypertonic, All Blacks...

But what about the dogs? What do they need to drink, and how do we give it to them?

Water is a vital component of cells and body tissue, to the point that mammals are considered at least 70% water. And in fact, when considering fluid requirements, an equivalent of one kilo of body weight to one litre of water is used.

So I weigh 20 kg. (Ah, the delights of a theoretical world...) My body contains around 20 litres of water. Every day, I lose some, I gain some. I get quite a lot from my food, but on average I need to drink about 50ml for each kilogram I weigh.

This means $20 \text{ (kg)} \times 50 \text{ (ml)} = 1000\text{ml} = 1 \text{ litre}$.

I need to drink one litre a day to maintain my hydration – on a quiet day. When I'm busy (training, searching, working out with the ABs...) I'll need more. I'll also need more if I have a fever, if the ambient temperature is high, and if my diet is mainly dry food.



So how do you know if I'm dehydrated?

Firstly, in an active situation in warm temperatures, assume I probably am. I've got better and more interesting things to do than drink!

Check my gums. Lift my upper lip and touch your fingertip to the gum over my teeth. Is it moist or tacky (sticky?) Tacky gums are one of the first signs of dehydration. (Take no notice of my nose – a wet/dry nose means very little!)

If I look a bit sad and flat, or things have been full-on, grab a pinch of skin over my shoulders. Lift it up and then let go. It should drop back down in 1-3 seconds. If it takes longer, I'm getting seriously dehydrated and drinking a bit more isn't enough. I need someone to give me fluids.

How?

By mouth – offer me water. I may not drink enough to rehydrate, but hey – my mouth will taste better.

Under the skin. Subcutaneous fluids (sub-cut, S/Q) get a lot of fluid into me, but it may take me some time to absorb them to where they're needed. Be very careful about hygiene, and only use isotonic (same concentration as body fluid) solutions to avoid serious damage.

In the vein. IV fluids are rapidly assimilated and redistributed. They need to be given under supervision – too fast and they can kill.



Best advice?

Know your dog, know its fluid requirements, and know some tricks to get it to drink when the heat is on. Water is the fluid of choice. Dogs don't need Powerade. Sometimes flavouring the water may make them drink more, but clean, fresh water is what most dogs need.



Library Books

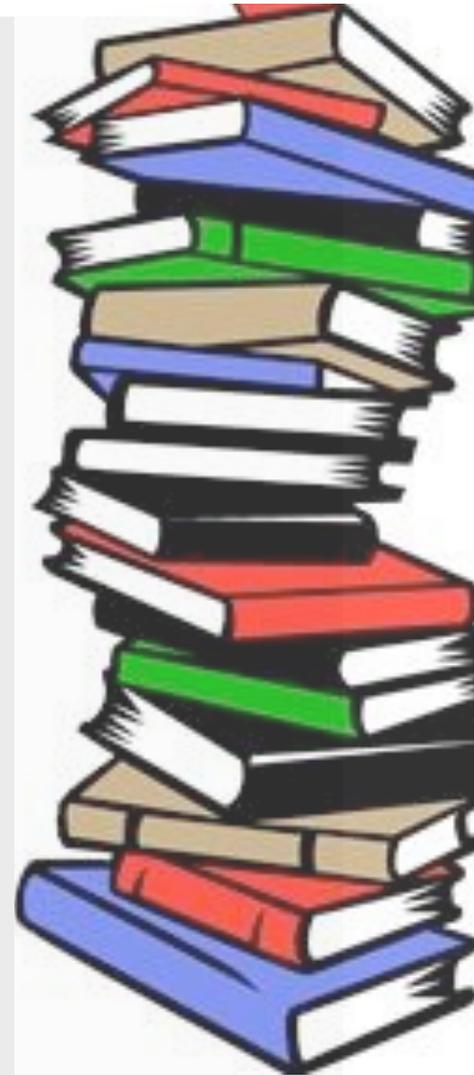
Following the February CHCH earthquake the USAR SDA were the recipients of a number of donations including several from the families of the victims. To honor these donations the SDA asked members for ideas for something which would have some longevity and benefit current and future USAR dog handlers in New Zealand. This library is one of the initiatives and these current titles are just the start of what we hope will become a useful resource for many years to come...

The books are all listed on the website and we are hoping as members read them we can also include book reviews.

Linda Pike has kindly agreed to be the USAR SDA "librarian" :-)

We have developed some guidelines for the borrowing of the library books

1. The books are available for loan by all USAR SDA members training regularly with one of the three training groups.
2. The books remain the property of the USAR SDA
3. A maximum of 2 books can be borrowed at a time
4. The loan time for the books is up to 2 months. At the end of the loan period the books need to come back to the "librarian". Where possible transfer of the books will occur via handlers travelling to training opportunities.
5. The books are the responsibility of the person borrowing them. Any loss or serious damage will require a replacement.



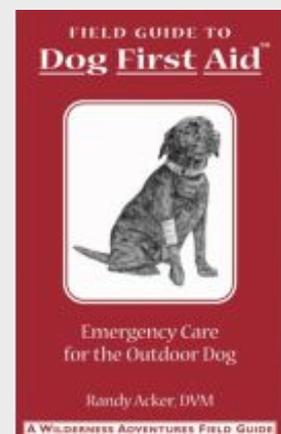
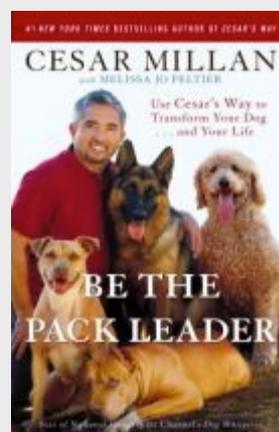
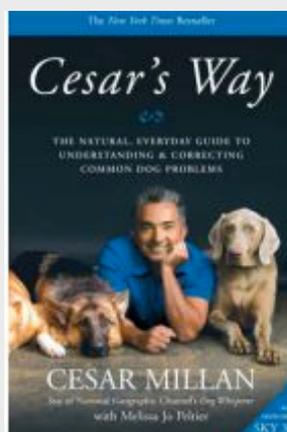
New books...

These books have just arrived and are now listed on the website and available for "borrowing"...

Cesar's Way- Cesar Milan

Be the Pack Leader- Cesar Milan

Dog First Aid



TRAINING IDEAS: Building Search

The focus of the USAR dog training tends to be on search work on rubble piles, simulating buildings which have completely collapsed. The reality is, which was confirmed by the deployment in CHCH, that USAR dogs will end up searching buildings that are still standing in some shape or form.

From a search perspective buildings are often more challenging than a pile of rubble. This is mainly due to the way scent moves around the structure. While at times the handler might not be able to access the building, doing thorough and systematic building search training when the handler can access the site seems to mean that when the dogs go in themselves they do more thorough searching with minimal direction.

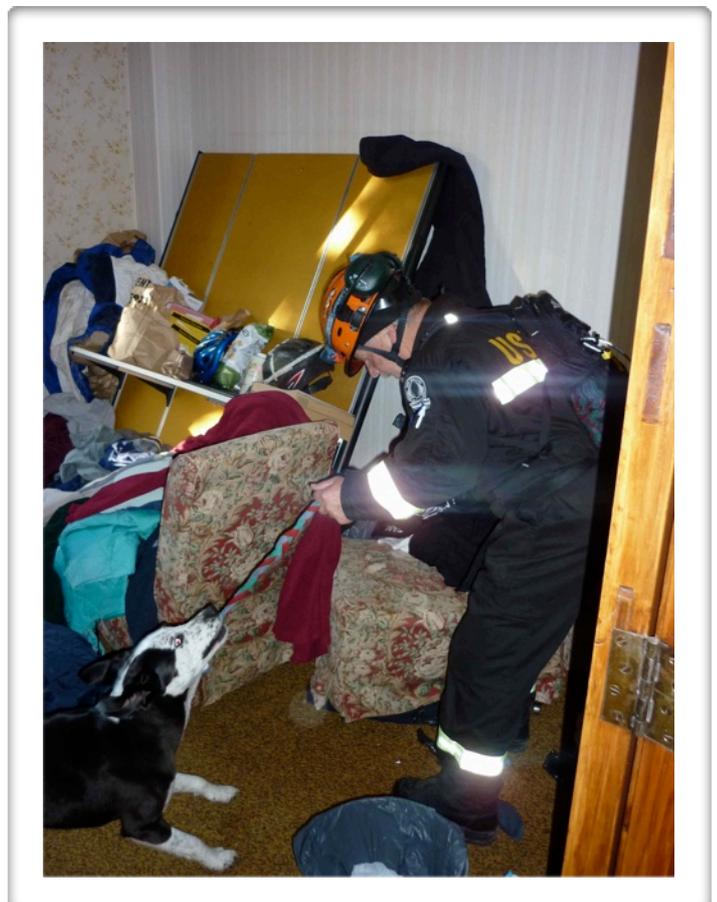
The first step is to develop some understanding of how scent moves in buildings. It sometimes helps to think of smoke and remember the days when we had smoking in pubs - there would be swirls of smoke moving around and pooling in areas

Scent is coming off a warm body and like warm air it will rise until it hits a solid object, usually the roof. Where the scent “drops” and forms a pool depends on a number of things including air currents from things like draughts, air vents, open windows, and air-conditioning ducts (working or not). It will tend to drop when it hits a cold wall where it is cooled to room temperature or lower. This might be the windows particularly in winter when they have not had the benefit of sunlight. Other times it might be an internal wall of solid concrete and there has not been any heating. Don't spend too much time trying to work out which wall it will be coming down, more just understand where the scent drops it might be quite a distance from the subject. As the scent is dropping it may also pool in things like basins or other “containers”.

When doing a building search consider running your most experienced dog first. This will give you some idea of what the scent is doing. Often a young dog is sent in to search a building and the handler and dog get confused and frustrated, only to later run a more experienced dog and it will have similar or unexpected results. While not all dogs will search or react the same it will give you some idea of how complex the problem is.

So, searching a building - this is just one strategy, but is based on experience:

Always carry a toy with you when you are doing building search- while you want to ideally get your dog to the subject this might not happen and you need to be able to reward on the scent pool when required.

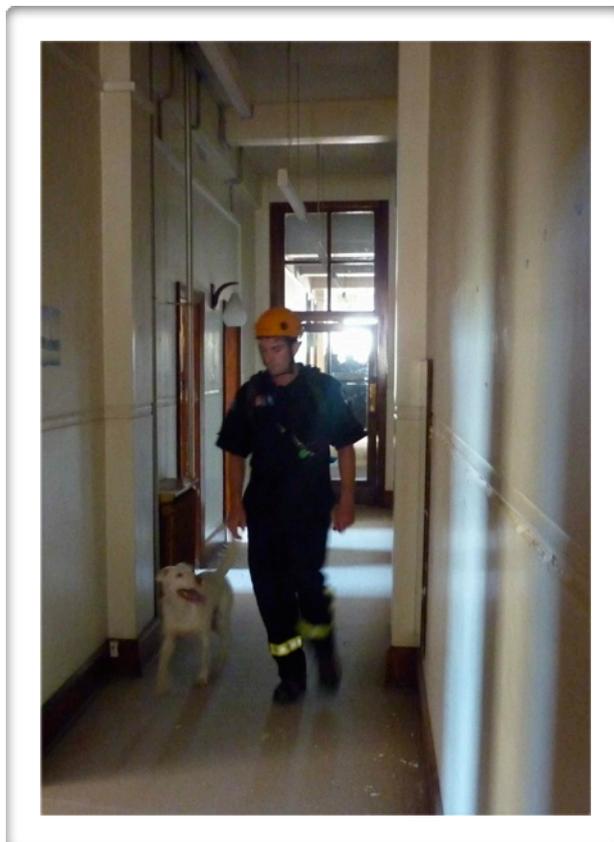


Your job as a handler is to get your dog into every possible location of a scent pool. To do this you need to methodically check every room in your search area. If your dog is at the other end of the search area consider going down to your dog and work back- this will give you more of an idea of the layout of your search area. Your other option is to call your dog back to you- be very careful doing this if you can't see your dog. This call back should not be harsh- you want them working as they come back to you- something like "come on" or "lets go" will keep them working.

Now go into every room with your dog and then in each room work around each corner. Use something like "check it out" and using your hand direct them around the edge of the room. At the same time you need to check for any extra doors or areas. Do this methodically and you will see your dog starting to develop its own pattern of searching and you should need minimal input.

When the dog has scent it may spend some time trying to work it out- just use some words of encouragement like, "nice" and give it time and space to see what it can work out. This is where you might see them alert on an area which is obviously not where there is a subject. Your dog is not wrong and you need to acknowledge that they are doing well- something like "nice work". The ideal is to get them to the subject, but at the end of the day in the real thing this might not be possible and being able to identify the presence of human scent is still a significant contribution to the search. When training you want to work with your dog to see if you can get them to what might be a narrow scent stream moving up from a subject. Take them around the room pointing to each area you want them to "check out". This is where your observer might need to help you. If your dog starts to get too confused or frustrated get some direction, or if it is just not going to work reward your dog on the scent pool.

Have fun....



Upcoming Events:

Date	Event	Venue
26/27 November	Operational Assessments	Christchurch
December	Next newsletter	-
2-4 March 2012	National Training Weekend	Palmerston North



www.usardogs.org.nz