

Some police service dogs and handlers receive additional work of a highly specialized sort which sharpens the dogs' olfactory senses for explosives or narcotics detection roles. Certain teams whose service is to be in rural or mountainous areas are trained to seek game caches or to do avalanche rescue work.

By far the oldest, most renowned Canadian service dog and handler training center is that of the RCMP. Since 1935, this Force has located its center at such sites as Vancouver, B.C.; Calgary, Alta.; Rockcliffe and Ramsayville, Ont.; Sydney, N.S.; and Regina, Sask. However, in 1965 the RCMP decided to build a permanent police dog training facility at Innisfail, Alta.⁶⁰ This site, about 75 miles north of Calgary, affords access to almost any type of terrain within a 70-mile radius.

The Innisfail facilities are extensive, covering 18 land acres. They include a staff residence, two kennel buildings and outdoor runs, administrative offices, a lecture room and an indoor kennel facility for 26 dogs. There is a large outdoor training area and differing exercise fields, including one which has a variety of obstacles and jumps for obedience and agility work. A wide range of field exercises takes place in the varied rural, mountainous and urban areas throughout the nearby Albertan countryside. The airports at Edmonton and Calgary are used as training sites for specialist sniffing dogs.

Canada's larger canine units train their own handler/dog teams. Moreover, they usually make their facilities available to forces in the region which have fewer teams. The Calgary police, for example, have a widely acclaimed center and well-designed kennels. This force has not only trained its own teams since 1960, but also has done so for a host of other Canadian and American forces as well. Vancouver's police

have done the same. The Ontario Provincial Police has trained teams for many forces at Mount Forest and has sent its own trainers to forces across the province.

It is important that police service dogs and handlers are regularly re-trained so that proficiency is maintained. Each force makes its own arrangements, of course, which may vary from department to department. But regular retraining is each handler's responsibility and is critical to keeping teams at a high level of fitness for all kinds of work. Periodic regional trials and competitions as well as an annual competition sponsored by the Canadian Police Canine Association are intended to help assure handler/dog proficiency.

A crucial issue in the future of police service dogs in Canada, as it is elsewhere, is the short supply of dogs suitable for police service. The RCMP started a breeding program in 1976 to help relieve the supply problem for its Force. The Calgary police also have experimented with breeding their own supply, as has Vancouver. American police forces at all levels are singing the supply blues, too.⁶¹ The supply issue is vexing, as is the best means for resolving it.

TO BE CONTINUED

60. Royal Canadian Mounted Police, *Police Dog Service*. RCMP: Public Relations Branch, 1980, p. 3.

61. Eileén Alt Powell, "Uncle Sam Seeks Dogged Dogfaces with Fetch Fetishes," *Wall Street Journal*, September 23, 1983, p. 1.