



Law enforcement canines Yukon, Roelle, Anchor and Max sit patiently as their handlers walk around a corner and stay out of sight for several minutes. Pictured below: After Trooper Aaron Mobley gives the command, his canine partner, Yukon, runs after a uncooperative subject.



Capt. Keith Mallard explains to Jessie Craig how the dogs will pull on the padded suit during apprehension training.

Man's best friend takes bite out of police work

By Beth Ipsen
Public Information Office

Most people would panic while facing a police dog, but not Jessie Craig. Craig bundled up in a thick padded black bite suit, and with unbridled enthusiasm, worked with the Alaska State Trooper Canine Unit during their latest quarterly training.

"It was fun," Craig said while looking through photos friends took of her on Aug. 5.

The black padded suit was cumbersome, but it protected her during the training.

"Even though I didn't have a helmet on, I felt completely safe," she said. "You can feel (the bite), but it was more like a tugging at your shirt."

Craig, who works as Alaska State Troopers director's secretary, participated in other ways during the training. On Aug. 7, she sat at a desk in an office building during a search. The dogs were directed to find her and help their human partner eliminate her as a threatening subject.

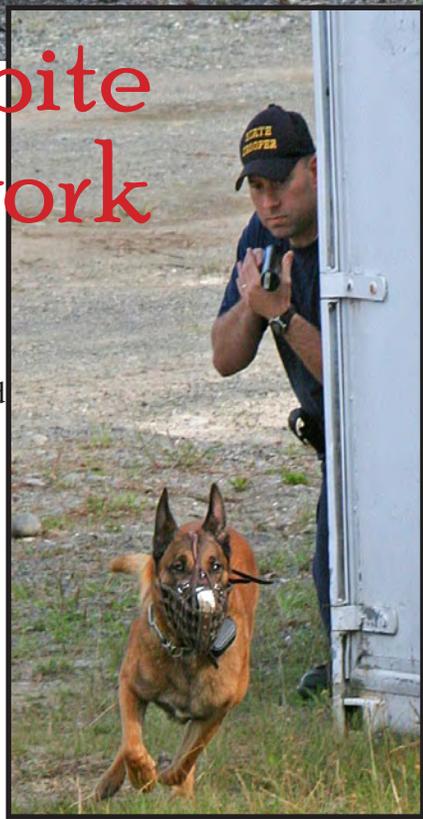
Craig volunteered to help after overhearing Capt. Keith Mallard, head of the AST's canine program and commander of the Alaska Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Enforcement, talk about AST's quarterly training that is also open to other police departments

around the state.

Ten dogs participated in the training Aug. 3-10 at the Alaska National Guard's Counter Drug Support Program facility on Fort Richardson. The quarterly training rotates between Fairbanks and Anchorage.

Of the 10, six came from Alaska State Trooper ranks. Other police departments across the state often send canine teams to the training, including Officer Lonnie Brown and canine Mocha from the Anchorage Police Department. APD has its own patrol training program for canine teams, but recently began relying on Alaska State Troopers' expertise in drug detection training.

Other visiting canine teams included Officer Mike Bennett and Max from the Kodiak Police Department; Officer Bev Moore and Daisy from





Palmer Trooper Patrick Nelson talks to his canine partner, Roelle, to keep his undivided attention during the obedience portion of certification.

the Fairbanks International Airport Police and Fire Department; and Air National Guard Master Sgt. Rick Houck and Tok from the Alaska Counter Drug Support Program.

The quarterly session provides more in-depth

instruction under more experienced guidance.

“It gives the newer and more experienced handlers a chance to have contact with an instructor and to work intensively for eight days on either correcting behavior, or further the abilities of their dogs or broadening the scope of what they can do,” Mallard said.

Klawock Trooper Aaron Mobley said the quarterly training is important because the team can work on more complex tasks.

“Being placed in a rural area, I have no trained personnel to help with training so attending training helps the team get back to where they need to be on the street,” he said. He and his four-legged partner, Yukon, are one of AST’s four dual-certified canine teams.

Each of the canine teams also need to

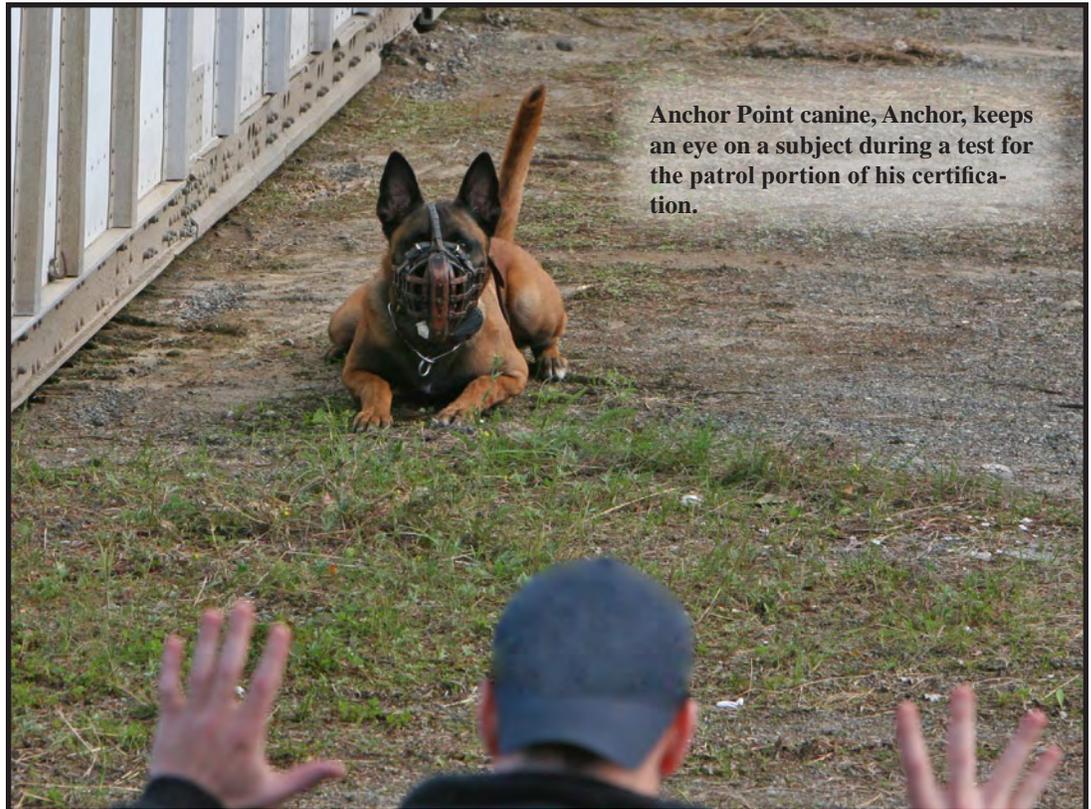
certify annually in each of their disciplines, whether its drug detection or patrol. Of the eight AST canine teams, four are dual certified. Two new canine teams were added to AST’s roster when ABADE Sgt. Scott Johnson and his partner Marley, and Trooper Brian Zeisel and his partner Argo, graduated from the AST Canine Academy this summer.

Per the Operating Procedure Manual, AST canines are required to put 2.5 hours per week into training. This is important, Mallard said, because an animal is involved in the equation.

“The most subtle things can affect and change how the dog behaves,” Mallard said.

On Aug. 7, four canine teams went through a series of tests under the scrutiny of canine instructor AST Inv. Joseph Hazelaar. The teams were Palmer Trooper Pat Nelson and Roelle; Anchor Point Trooper Greg Pealatore and Anchor; Klawock Trooper Aaron Mobley and Yukon; Kodiak Police Officer Mike Barnett and Max. The teams started the day by going through basic obedience tests. Then the teams moved to an area where they simulated answering a call and handling an uncooperative subject. Next came searching for subject in the woods and later for subjects in an office building.

Meanwhile, the detection dogs and handlers trained in another area of Fort Richardson by sniffing out different types of drugs. Detection teams AST



Anchor Point canine, Anchor, keeps an eye on a subject during a test for the patrol portion of his certification.



Kodiak Police Officer Mike Bennett keeps his cover as he yells a warning to an unruly subject before sending his dog, Max, to corner the uncooperative person.

Inv. Jess Carson and Kilo; AST Inv. Rick Pawlak and Custa; Hazelaar and Duncan; and Fairbanks International Airport Officer Bev Moore and Daisy; went through the annual detection certification process the day before and some were conducting further training to improve the detection skills while their dual-certified counterparts were certifying their patrol skills after also certifying on drug detection.

Canine detection teams are valuable because a dog's ability to smell odors is far greater than humans and therefore allows officers to obtain search warrants when investigating a drug case.

In the patrol realm, the canines tend to create a safer environment for the officers because studies have shown they have a greater psychological impact on subjects than an individual officer does.

"They're a force multiplier," Mallard said.

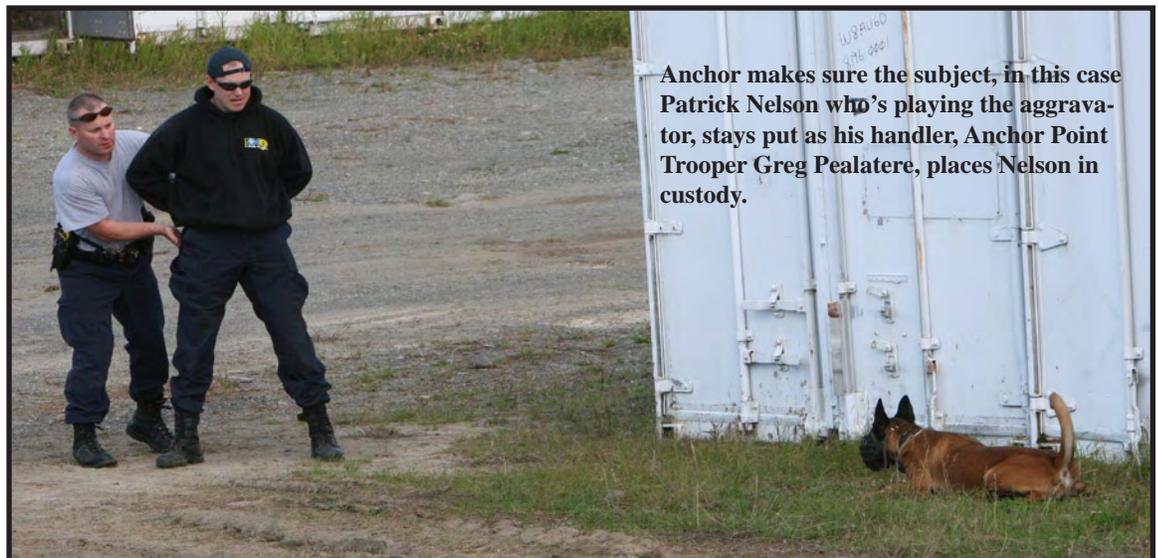
Mobley said while being a canine handler means additional time and responsibilities, it's also rewarding.

"Having a K9 is like no other. You can't just go home and put him away and forget about him like your gun belt and vest. This animal is tied to your hip. Wherever

you go he wants to be. He is truly like a puppy dog that follows you everywhere," said Mobley, who has been a handler for over three years. "You have to not only think for yourself but also the canine team and everyone else around you. You have to maintain a 90 percent or better on all your testing and training to pass the course."

For Craig, who has previous experience working at a veterinarian clinic, the experience participating in the quarterly training provided her with a more realistic understanding of how law enforcement canine teams operate, not the impression she gets from Hollywood.

Other stories on the subject of AST canine teams can be found on the [Public Information Office](#) website and in the page 18 of the [2007 Winter Quarterly](#) and page 11 of the [2007 Fall Quarterly](#).



Anchor makes sure the subject, in this case Patrick Nelson who's playing the aggravator, stays put as his handler, Anchor Point Trooper Greg Pealatero, places Nelson in custody.