

The Canine Specialized Search Team

By Lynne Engelbert

A sister organization to the Institute for Canine Forensics is the Canine Specialized Search Team (CSST), a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation. CSST is a volunteer resource to the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office.

CSST teams are specialized in human remains detection (HRD) and forensics evidence, and exceed the requirements of the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) Law Enforcement Branch standard for certification. This organization is available for all agencies in Santa Clara County, and as mutual aid to other counties throughout the State of California. As mutual aid, we are requested and dispatched through CalOES.

CSST specializes in "cold cases", those cases that have been around for years but, for one reason or another, have remained unsolved. Some of our cases have been as old as 50 years. To specialize in this field, our teams train side-by-side with the ICF teams, and are often one-in-the-same. This means training on old burials such as those at cemeteries and old bones obtained from anatomical supply houses. The teeth we train on are obtained from oral surgeons and left to dry in the sun before use. Long bones and teeth can retain DNA for many years and are important to identify victims of cold cases.

This team also works current criminal cases, helping to locate blood evidence, clandestine burials and other evidence such as weapons.

Canine Specialized Search Team promotes extensive and advanced training and certification of our teams to ensure a high degree of proficiency and professionalism. We constantly train and develop new and advanced techniques to maintain the highest skills possible.



K9 Piper is shown alerting on a large bone that is buried in the



Jett (14 weeks old) trying on his new boots. We expose our puppies to as many new places and experiences as possible so when our search takes us to a different kind of terrain our dogs are ready.

grass during a search. This bone helped identify the missing person.

Transportation

Sometimes getting to the search area is more difficult than the actual search. We train our dogs to travel in all kinds of vehicles. Tolerate being close with other dogs on the team and having other people being responsible for their care.



Dolly and Kayle flying in a small airplane



Adela & Jasper, John & Kayle, Barbara & Bailey



Lynne and Piper with local transportation



Lynne and Piper on the ATV and Dr. Pierce in the other vehicle. Sand storm moving in fast.



Ok, so maybe this was really just for fun. We WERE on a project in Hawaii' though!



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