



THE GAME CHANGER: THE K9s IN DUAL ROLE OF BOMB DETECTION AND ASSAULT AS POTENT TACTICAL WEAPON IN FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

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Col (Dr) PK Chug (Retd) was commissioned in Army in Feb 1993. He is an Ex-Remount Veterinary Corps officer, who has unique distinction of commanding Dog Units thrice while posted in Army-RR [in Kashmir valley (J&K)], in NSG and SFF (Special Group). He has rich experience in Counter Insurgency/Counter Terrorism Operations. Besides introducing the concept of heliborne slithering with dogs in Army during year 2001, the officer has developed numerous innovative, inexpensive dog training aids to prepare for diverse real-world scenarios. Known for his technical acumen, the officer has written several articles besides being a speaker during National and International level Conferences & Seminars. He is a qualified Veterinary Microbiologist apart from being a Certified Technical Assessor (ISO 17025), declared by NABL. He is also a Paratrooper and has qualified in Bomb Disposal (Basic & Advance level) Courses. Apart from that, he is an accomplished professional K9 Trainer and is recipient of many awards. Presently the Govt of India has entrusted him responsibility of Consulting Director of newly established Police K9 Cell under the Ministry of Home Affairs for mainstreaming and augmentation of Police K9s in the country.



Brigadier Vikas Saini, SM, VSM was commissioned into Parachute Regiment in 1988. He is an alumnus of National Defence Academy and Indian Military Academy. The officer has attended Defence Services Staff College Course and Higher Command Course. He has a degree of Master of Science in Defence and Strategic Studies, Diploma in Senior level Defence Management and a degree of Master of Philosophy in Defence Management. He has held numerous staff and instructional appointments including instructor at Special Forces Training School. The officer has commanded 24 Assam Rifles in Counter Insurgency Area at Indo-Myanmar border. He then commanded the only airborne formation of the Country, that is 50 Independent Parachute Brigade. He has also been posted as the Commandant Parachute Regiment Training Centre, Bangalore. The officer is presently posted as Force Commander, National Security Guard from Nov 2018. He has extensive and diverse operational experience in Counter-Insurgency Operations in Jammu and Kashmir and North East. He has also served on the Line of Control and High Altitude Areas. The officer also participated in OPERATION VIJAY. He has been awarded with Sena Medal (Gallantry), Vishisht Seva Medal and GOC-in-C Western Command Commendation Card.



General

1. The interest generated about the only member with four legs among all 80 members of the American commando team who thundered into Abbottabad, Pakistan, and killed Osama bin Laden on May, the 2nd 2011 was the first time when it caught the public imagination world over and witnessed a dog (K9) in an offensive role leading the raids of such high sensitivity and magnitude alongside best trained commandos. For months and years, it remained the subject of intense speculation to know more about the SEAL Team Six, the elite military operatives of US Navy but perhaps the only one name was released, CAIRO the dog, a Belgian Shepherd Malinois breed K9. Its use in the highly sensitive raid reflects the military's growing dependence on K9s in wars in which improvised explosive devices have caused two-thirds of all casualties. Dogs have proved far better than people or machines at quickly finding bombs. CAIRO on the raid could have checked the compound for explosives and even sniffed door handles to see if they were booby-trapped. And with past experience of Saddam Hussein, who was found hiding in a narrow, dark hole beneath a mud shack in Iraq, the Seal team might have brought the dog in case Bin Laden had built a secret room into his compound. The K9s are extremely good in detecting people hidden inside a building. Another use could have been to catch if anyone tries to escape the compound in the initial moments of the raid. A Belgian Shepherd Malinois K9 runs more than double the speed of a human being and an ideal tool for getting someone who is running away without having to shoot upon them. It was dual tasking K9 to go after a suspect, and was trained to bite and hold the suspect in the process of attack apart from their explosive detection task.



Belgian Malinois: 'No better dog' to track down insurgents, bite armed terrorists

2. In yet another eye catching incident after nearly 08 years of Cairo's deeds, the military dog CONAN assigned to 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta, known as Delta Force, a unit that falls under the secretive Joint Special Operations Command was unleashed on Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the Chief of terrorist organization Islamic States, in the final approach, forcing him to blow himself up at the end of a dark tunnel in Syria. Conan, the hero K9, was injured in the incident but soon recovered well. The Belgian Malinois K9 was credited for her incredible role in the operation by US President Donald Trump, who tweeted her photo without revealing her name. The K9 became famous overnight after it cornered the dreaded terrorist leader in a dead-end tunnel during the raid. The K9 CONAN established for yet another time that these dual tasking military working dogs can perform a tremendous service, as they can succeed in a variety of operational situations. The terrorist, who once established his reign of terror across the globe and carved out a terror nation from the Middle East as big as Great Britain, was chased and cornered into a dark tunnel by US Special Forces dogs. The US President Donald Trump said when the American troops landed in eight



Meet Conan, the Belgian Shepherd Malinois K9 that helped end the IS chief's reign of terror



helicopters along with specially trained K9s, they also had with them a robot, the first of its kind, to go after the IS leader inside the tunnel. Being chased by dogs towards the dead-end of a tunnel, Baghdadi killed himself by blowing up his powerful suicide vest, as such the robot was not used, the president told reporters at the White House while giving details of the operation in northwest Syria. It further highlighted the unique employability of such highly trained ASSAULT K9s in challenging environments outperforming their human counterparts and high end technology, both at the same time.

Conan's role in IS chief's death has cemented the value of K9s in the high-risk special operations by Forces world over.

3. In Indian context, the Assault K9s were used for the first time during Pathankot airbase attack by heavily armed Pakistani terrorists on 2 January 2016. In the effective counter terror efforts launched by the NSG elite Black Cats, the role of Assault K9 Rocket was matchless when he entered into the building fearlessly despite it being on fire and gave the NSG team some vital leads to make an effective tactical plan, neutralising the five attackers. The Assault K9 Rocket sustained partial burn injuries and was applauded by all for his bravery in the face of extreme adversity and conferred the award of Chief of Army Staff Commendation and also commendation by the DG NSG for displaying courage of exceptional order. Subsequent experience proved the requirement of such valiant K9s more in numbers with counter terror units.



NSG's Assault K9 Rocket

Belgian Shepherd Malinois - The K9 Hero Breed

4. Both Conan, the canine which forced IS chief to blow himself up and the Cairo, took part in the operation which led to the death of al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden at his hideout in Pakistan's Abbottabad were both Belgian Shepherd Malinois Breed of K9. It is a special breed commonly used by the military and police world over. The breed is preferred for its compact size, making it ideal for fast-roping or jumping out of aircraft. Handlers often refer to Belgian Malinois dogs as "Maligators" or "Hair Missiles" due to their speed, agility and strong jaw.

Fast, Fearless and Ferocious Force-K9

5. Conan is part of the US Delta Force, a unit that operates under highly lethal but secretive US joint special operations command. Dogs like Conan are assigned to American troops in troubled areas across the globe. The dogs like Conan and Cairo are armed and prepared for battle with strong vests and training. They are even trained to leap out of planes along with human soldiers for insertions during secret missions. They are deployed for reconnaissance as well as surveillance, using camera snapped to their bodies. K9 units are also used frequently for sniffing operations, search and rescue, explosive ordnance disposal, and hunt and kill.

Background of Assault K9s in India

6. Before the 1970s, terrorism was largely a one-dimensional threat to individual lives and property. From last two decades it has evolved into a multi-dimensional threat to the lives of large numbers of people, to the economy and to the critical information infrastructure. Combating terrorists in military-style evolved into a war



against terrorism after the 9/11 terrorist strikes against the most powerful, insular nation on earth brought into focus the hardening of the motivation of terrorists, an increase in community support for them and a surge in the flow of new recruits to terrorist organizations across the Globe.

7. India is a large nation with countless politically sensitive strategic and economic assets. Providing credible physical security to these sensitive assets is a humongous and onerous task. Therefore, in recent times, the need has been felt to acquire certain concepts / equipment which not only act as force multipliers for commandos but have the potential to be applied as effective tactical weapon in counter terrorist operation. To increase their capabilities, for the first time in India, the Assault K9 concept was introduced in NSG after the Mumbai incident.

8. An Assault K9 is basically an attack dog of any breed, trained and used for the purpose of attacking a target either on command or on sight. Dogs in warfare have a long history starting in ancient times. From 'war dogs' trained in combat to their use as scouts, sentries and trackers, their use have been varied and the same continues to exist even in modern military doctrines.

Historical Background for Use of Assault K9s in Operations

9. Early in recorded history, there are records of dogs being trained for the purpose of attacking a target. One of the most well-recorded ancient uses was in a battle between the Athenians and Corinthians, in which dogs were used to keep watch over a fortress and despite being unsuccessful in opposing a cherry attack, were able to alert the sleepily soldiers of the attack. Ancient Romans first adopted the use of dogs as a weapon after dogs delayed their victory in the Battle of Vercellae. The Romans not only trained them to attack, but also bred their attack dogs for ferocity.

10. Napoleon utilized dogs for their superior senses putting them to work in roles similar to that of modern sentry dogs. Over a period, assault dog is trained to chase, hold and injure or kill a perceived hostile target. Nowadays, assault dogs are used by almost every police force in the world. Modern counter terrorist dog teams are specially trained in silent intervention / sentry removal / hostage rescue and close quarter battle.

Need for Assault K9s

11. K9s are compact, mobile, agile, easily transportable resources that can work in a variety of conditions including confined spaces and difficult terrain. It will increase the speed of many operations and by its ability to locate the target at a distance in the right conditions, it can enhance the effectiveness of searches and subsequent attacks. It is an Excellent Deterrent in Most Circumstances. The dog has been making major contributions in the fight against terrorism in many areas. The value of dog lies in its vastly superior sense of smell, sharpness of smell, ability to notice and detect even the slightest of movements. By interpreting the dog's reaction when it employs these physical capabilities and by developing the natural aggression in certain dogs, the security services are provided with a useful agent against the terrorist. The search on continuous response to terrorism has had a tremendous effect on the concept of developing the search and assault capabilities in the dog.

12. The superior abilities of a dog are olfactory (sniffing), sense of hearing and sharp vision.

- (a) **Olfactory capability of dog.** Dog possesses highly developed senses and is known for its super natural olfactory capability. Dog's sense of smell is nearly 40 times better than human beings.
- (b) **Hearing.** Hearing ability of a dog is considered almost twenty times more than the human counterparts.
- (c) **Vision.** Dogs are colour blind however their vision ten times more than humans.



13. An Assault K9 is a dog breed which has the ability of aggression, ferocity and fearlessness, trained and applied for the purpose of attacking a target either on command or on sight. Such K9s do not attack out of fear or anger, they attack because of their unique training of sensing the incoming danger and perceived threat.

Use of Assault K9s by Global Special Force Units

14. An Assault Dog, often referred to as a 'K9', (being a homophone of canine, the biological name of dog) in most of the world, is a dog that is trained specifically to assist Special Forces and other law-enforcement personnel in their work. The most commonly used breed is the German Shepherd, however in last couple of decades, Belgian Shepherd Malinois (BSM) has emerged a breed of choice for the assault purpose. Special Forces of most advance nations are extensively using Assault K9s, however, following specifically merit attention being the leader in this field:-

- (a) **Israel.** The first Counter Terrorist (CT) dogs was used during 1980 by Sayeret Matkal of Israel during their hostage rescue operation in the Misgave Hum Kibbutz. This operation was the land mark in the Israeli SF tactical history since it was the first mission in which CT dogs from specialized K9 unit of Israel named Oketz (means Sting – of a Scorpion) were deployed against terrorists.
- (b) **Germany.** The GSG-9 started using the assault dog in early 1990s and have named them as anti-terrorist K9s. They also use Belgian Shepherd Malinois as an assault dog. The dogs employed for assault are hard aggressive animals that inspire fear in the enemy and protect their handler against attackers and be prepared to tackle courageously anyone found lurking in the poorly lighted streets or open spaces.
- (c) **France.** Members of GIGN intervention unit are trained extensively in aircraft assault, ship assault and building assault. They are also trained extensively at French prisons to prepare for operations during prison riots or when hostages are taken. GIGN dog handlers work closely with other operators and the dogs are trained to aid in tubular assaults (i.e. aircraft) by being inserted to take down any one with a gun just before the assault teams enter. GIGN dogs are even trained to parachute or rappel with their handlers.
- (d) **United States.** Assault dogs are in wide spread use across the United States of America. K9 units operate at the federal, state, county and local level and are utilized for a wide variety of duties similar to other nations. The Special Forces of USA like MARSOCs, Marines, Seals and Delta Force uses them extensively. Even Police uses similar type of K9s called Patrol K9s or Police Utility K9s which are trained in patrol/assault task, detection and tracking.

Training of Assault K9s

15. **Role of Assault K9.** K9 for assault role should be trained in the areas of suspect search, suspect apprehension, handler protection, multiple suspect apprehension, recall (call-off), release on command, building search, area search, suspect transport, gunfire apprehensions, high risk scenarios. K9 should be trained to be directed remotely to perform tasks such as suspect recognition, laying or taking of objects, human detection or to launch a simultaneous attack. The possibility of working at a distance from the master must be at minimum of 300 meters. K9 must be trained to work either inside or outside the buildings, areas and other operational scenarios, while at sight or out of sight.

16. **Search and Assault.** Assault K9 training is aimed at training the dog to search for the human suspect, chase if trying to escape,



NSG Counter Terror K9 Spike



hold them and injure/maim or if possible kill a perceived hostile target. Assault K9s are trained to interpret a situation and react swiftly. In formal training, dogs are exposed to gun fire/grenade attack and explosive blasts to make them battle worthy. While these K9s are largely trained to pursue, attack and injure the terrorists on command from its handler, they are also trained to respond independent of its Handler with extreme alacrity if they perceive imminent threat to their Handler or own Team. The major difference to note here is that the K9 is not attacking out of fear or anger, the K9 attacks because he has been trained to launch the assault with his team.

17. **Environment Stability & Socializability.** Further, these Assault K9s are trained in variety of tactical movements while approaching the target without making any noise/barking or showing any excitement. They are socialized to a very high degree that they are not affected while coming across different kind of people and remain friendly in the presence of their Handler without display of any sort of aggression. Further, they are environmentally stable in the sense that these K9s are given exposure to different types of environments, sounds, operational settings that they remain calm, focussed irrespective of background sounds or distractions. It's arduous task to achieve however with consistent efforts and repeated exposures, such an aim could be achieved if carefully attempted in a gradual manner.

18. **Tactical Obedience Training.** These assault K9s are imparted training of tactical obedience instead of conventional basic obedience. It is this tactical obedience which is going to be extremely useful while preparing the assault K9s for attack in varying types of operational settings. It becomes significant because the K9 must become part of the House Intervention Team (HIT) and learn to move in the stack maintaining surprise for the enemy target by not making any kind of sound, vocal and physical calm until approaching the target. Further, these K9s are also trained and given frequent exposures to remain calm for varying period of time to wait patiently till the conditions are favourable to launch an attack.



The Assault K9s have become integral part of SWOT Teams to launch an offensive

19. **Evolution of Assault K9 Concept.** The assault K9 training is significantly different than the conventional Guard dogs employed in Defence Forces and also by other border guarding forces. Initially the Guard dogs were introduced in NSG too. However, over a period of time it, it was realised that NSG needs a different kind of K9 which should meet the unique requirements of the sensitive and high value intervention operations. Accordingly, with continuous efforts on training and their validating them in various kinds of Counter Terrorist



(CT) exercises, the NSG has been able to evolve them as formidable Assault K-9 which is altogether a new concept in the country matching to those used by Special Forces world over. During all this period the concept has evolved substantially and the last three years starting from Jan 2017 to Jul 2019 was a period of complete transformation when the concept of Assault K9 was matured and additional K9s were introduced, prepared from puppyhood to fully finished K9s best suited to deliver in variety of operational objectives for the NSG.

Aim of Assault K9s

20. The prime aim of an Assault K9 in supporting the stack/HIT during highly sensitive, high value intervention operation is as under:

- Locating the target/suspect/terrorist
- Limiting the move of the target.
- Producing shock action for the target.
- Engaging the target constructively and distracting him decisively. Some K9s are big enough that, when they leap on a suspect, the person tends to drop to the ground while others bite arms or legs of the suspect. Different K9s do different things, but whatever they do, it's very difficult for that person to go any further or recover easily.
- Providing an opportunity for the members of the Stack/HIT to fire first and neutralizing the suspect thereby increasing the likelihood of sustaining own casualty.

Preparation of Assault K9s

21. **Uniqueness of K9 and Breed.** An Assault K9 is any dog breed having natural instinct of ferocity as well as exceptional nose work. These are further imparted specialized training for the purpose of attacking a target/suspect either on command or on sight. As brought out earlier, the K9 does not attack out of fear or anger, the K9 attacks because it has been trained to launch an attack on imminent threat. An assault K9 is a dog which is specifically trained to assist the Special Forces and other law-enforcement personnel in locating the target/threat and leading the assault as per operational requirement for a certain tactical advantage. The

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OF ASSAULT K9s	
Tactical Obedience & Control Skills	Suspect Search Test
Heel	Building Search (Urban Environment)
Sit	Locate a hidden agitator(s) that are not known within multiple buildings/compounds/rooms who present a passive target in presence of hostages
Down	Leave on command on leash whilst handler is within same room as K9
Stand	K9 can continue building clearance after previous bite
Stay	Excellent IFF (Identification, Friend or Foe) of other team members whilst dressed in uniform and assault kit
Move Out	Search all rooms to adequate standard where the decoy is not present
Heel Walk With & Without Leash	Can clear building with simple distractions present (bite arms, food etc)
Obedience commands on & off leash work from a distance of at least 80 meters at sight (Off-Leash)	Can utilise muzzle attack during clearance and engage target adequately
Recall	Area search
Can be controlled with above skills during tactical movement	Search an area in front of handler to locate a target out to on command where there is no wind advantage to the K9 (including in presence of hostages).
Battle Inoculation with simultaneous obedience commands (Can perform skills around gunfire)	Wind scent a target
Refusal of food	Follow hand signal during clearance
Agility Test	Attack a passive target after locating them
Obstacle clearance	Can be 'fixed' onto a prey/ running target and attack / engage on various target presentations
Laser Guidance	K9 can continue to work on with the clearance after bite serial
Directed remotely through radio devices	Evidence search
Basic Assault Training Skills	Scenario Based Skills
Sack, Sleeve, Suit attack	Attack in building intervention
Attack Weapon or Intruder	Attack in open area
Muzzle Attack	Attack in motor vehicles, bus & air craft
Willingness to Search	Attack during night
Temperament- ability to keep calm during search	Insertion
Aggression- Ferocity of Attack	
Stealth while accompanying the HIT	K9 can conduct an off leash insertion/ extraction
Control over activity of Intruder during watch	K9 can be rappelled from building and aircraft mock up
Obedience while HIT intervenes	K9 can be fast roped from aircraft mock up
Obedience level while attacking	Can be loaded into aircraft/ helicopter unmuzzled
Working at a distance from the Master at minimum of 300 meters off sight	Can travel in vehicles with other patrol members
Movement and Obstacles Negotiation	Can travel in a boat
Jump over short wall on command	Can be transported in a crate
Carried/ Passed over high wall	Socialization Skills
Climb high angle ladders	Stock proof to common farm/stray animals
Climb up and down both open and closed stairs	Socialised to other FE (Force Element) members with handler present
Carried on back of handler using backpack straps (slithering harness)	Additional Optional Operational Capability
Enter short tunnel both day and night	K9 will attack all target pictures
Hauled/ Lifted to higher position using long lead	K9 is familiar with handler and FE when gas masks are worn
Passed to other team members	K9 has good IFF of FE when in different uniforms/ assault equipment is worn
Can complete obstacles in tactical environment	K9 can be used in confined areas
Aggression Control Test	K9 can be used in a Maritime environment
Recall	K9 should be trained to be directed remotely through radio devices to perform tasks such as suspect recognition, laying or taking of objects, human detection or to launch a simultaneous attack
False start	
Release on Command	
Termination of Chase or Call Off	
Short chase with gunfire	
Handler Protection	



most commonly used breed of dog is German Shepherd Dog (GSD), however in last decade or more, the Belgian Shepherd Malinois (BSM) have come out as a choice of breed for such an exceptional task. BSM dogs are most agile, ferocious yet socializable, highly trainable due to inherent prey, hunting and defence drives and all weather friendly.

22. **Operational Preparedness.** Assault K9s are prepared and training imparted to the dog to chase, hold and injure/maim or if possible kill a perceived hostile target. These K9s are prepared with consistent efforts to read and interpret the operational situation and swiftly react appropriately. To achieve this specialized and sensitive task, formal training is imparted in gradual manner by constantly exposing the K9 to operational setting starting from simpler forms and gradually adding more dimensions and challenging conditions for dog to learn and react appropriately. Slowly and gradually the K9 is taken into the real time operations in the form of CT exercises by exposing them to gun fire/grenade or explosive blasts in close vicinity and yet the K9 remains focussed on the hostile target.

23. **Habit of Search and Attack.** All possible pictures of battle/operation are painted before the K9 to learn consistency and reliability in its performance. Once the K9 is prepared in simple operational environment, it is taken to different types of operational environment from various types of areas to different types of building, vehicles, metro trains, aircrafts etc. The K9 is trained to launch an attack at the entry point of a building to deep inside the building, clearing rooms one by one, moving up the floors by gradually clearing them and reaching to the target without opening or disturbing the scene, maintaining utmost surprise in leading role with the HIT or Stack. This habit of searching is largely based on nose work and it needs to be developed by giving confidence of achieving success from simpler forms to more difficult hides. These K9s are trained to pursue, attack and actively engage the target on command from its handler. The issue is again re-emphasized that the K9 is not attacking out of fear or anger, the K9 attacks because he has been trained to attack on command or to ensure protection of his handler and own team.

24. **Suit Attack and Muzzle Attack.** The above mentioned objective of training the assault K9 is achieved by initially keeping the suspect in Bite Suit (provides protection against dog bites). Once the K9 is showing the consistency, the Hidden Bite Suit (the one which can be worn under the normal cloths yet provide protection against dog bites) is used by the suspect to give exposure to the K9 of attacking a suspect in normal cloths. The next stage is Muzzle Attack wherein the K9 is allowed to attack the suspect who is not wearing any protective clothing in variety of operational settings while the K9 is muzzled to avoid any injury. The physical contact of the K9 with suspect actually prepares the K9 for the real fight and develop endurance during the fight. Although the K9 hits and hurt the suspect despite muzzle, however, it's vital to prepare them to shed any hesitation or inhibition during the actual fight. The fight in the K9 comes to light in such challenging situations which inspire confidence in own team and allow them to apply in variety of operational situations.

25. **Dead Equipment Neutrality.** The next important issue is to develop K9 neutral to the equipments which are not used by the suspect. It is to ensure that the K9 is prepared to target suspect and not his gear or equipments. In the event, suspect drops the weapon, clothing or any other article during the fight, K9 must not loose focus from the target and not get distracted towards the dead equipment.

26. **Hostage Rescue Situation.** Once the K9 is focused on the target by painting a wide range of operational pictures, the group of hostages are introduced to develop passivity towards hostages who are sitting inactive under the dominance of the Kidnapper or terrorists. The most important issue here is that assault K9 must learn that everybody on the enemy/opposite side is not the target, only those which are holding the weapon, shouting, threatening, moving decisively, dominating is only to be perceived as imminent threat and hence the target for the assault K9.

27. **Scenario Based Training.** During this stage training is imparted to assault K9s at different environments and locations to prepare them for wide range of real world operations. The dogs are conditioned to move in the stack/HIT, approach the target maintaining the surprise element before breaking into operation, while members of the HIT firing constantly, throwing grenades and other explosive blasts to make them battle worthy.



- **Building Intervention.** To make the habit of assault K9 to search all rooms of the building as the team advances. Based on the indication of the K9, the stack/HIT to intervene accordingly. It is significant to move without breaking the surprize the HIT approaches the location where suspect is hiding with the help of assault K9 and undertakes intervention decisively. Here as well, the K9 leads the assault engaging the target positively giving enough time to other members of the HIT to neutralize the target. The K9 should indicate passively for imminent threat present inside the room. On thrash opening the door by the stack, the K9 to lead the attack over the suspect with highest alacrity and engage him constructively. The Threat is neutralized before the K9 is taken off the site. It should be practiced in variety of buildings like office complex, shopping mall, cinema halls, schools, universities, hotels, convention centres or other such complex buildings.
- **Metro Train Intervention.** The same intervention drill is practiced with the K9 in the stack while moving towards the metro train maintaining the surprise vertically or horizontally depending upon the operational situation. The K9 leads team once the entry is opened to locate the threat and launch attack before other members can reach and neutralize the target. The point to remember is controlling the K9 to remain passive towards the hostages sitting unreactive or unresponsive.
- **Train Intervention.** It is similar to metro train intervention except that there may be requirement to use ladders due to height of the train compartments however the assault K9s should be encouraged to launch directly without use of ladders.
- **Bus/Vehicle Intervention.** It can be static vehicle or may be moving vehicle. The assault K9s are prepared for both situations to enter into the bus directly through the window and engage the target. K9 to attack on the persons who is in possession of the weapon.
- **Aircraft Intervention.** Intervention follow-up for the assault K9 remains the same except the difference being the target scenario which is difficult to approach and breach subsequently. The K9 can be launched from a catering vehicle, or along with HIT through the wings or through vehicle by using ladders. Once inside the aircraft, the K9 searches for the target and swiftly launches the attack.

K9 Proficiency Evaluation Test (PET)

28. It is always vital to ascertain the technical proficiency of assault K9s as per laid down performance standards. It should be tested in different scenarios for which the K9 is expected to perform. The assault K9s not reaching the desired levels of performance especially those displaying gun shyness or timidity must be rejected at an early stage itself. The K9s showing strong nerves not deviating from approaching the target or suspect despite adverse/challenging environments are best suited for the task. The evaluation is aimed at testing the training skills of the assault K9 team in approaching and searching the target, displaying patience and apt time to unfold the attack, keep the target engaged till neutralized or directed to leave. Also post assault, the K9 must display calmness and controlled drives to safely retrieve him back to base. The one page proforma to assess and record the performance is given opposite.

K-9 PET (PROFICIENCY EVALUATION TEST) VALIDATION OF ASSAULT K9 TEAM (Asst DT)			
No./Name of K9 :		No./Name of K9 Handler :	
Date of Last Evaluation :		Date of Evaluation :	
Team Association		Max Score (5)	
Heel	Stand	Sty	Down
Heel Walk with leash	Heel Walk without leash	Obstacle Clearance	Move Out
Obed Comds on & off leash	Refusal of Food		
Battle Isolation with simultaneous obedience commands			
Basic Trg Skills		Max Score (20)	
Gack baiting	Suit Attack	Sleeve baiting	Muzzle Attack
Stealth while accompanying the HIT	Control Over Activity of intruder (esp during search)	Aggression - Ferocity of attack	Obedience level whilst attacking
		Attacks wpn or the intruder	Willingness to search
		Temperament - Ability to keep calm during search	Watch obedience (w/Hit HIT interferences)
Scenario Based Skills		Max Score (75)	
Attack in Bldg Intervention	Attack in Open Area	Attack in Vehicle (Bus/Car/Train)	Release and Recall from a distance
		Attack task during Night	
TOTAL SCORE		MAX SCORE (100)	
★ Star Rating : High Risk Ops		Max Score (20) Star Rating to be awarded only to those dog teams who score ≥15	
Silencing/Rappelling/Abseiling with Dog	Integrated Ops with RR/Inf/Coos	Mid Way Withdrawal from Attack	Release and Recall on Wireless Mode
		Attack on Laser Point	Yes / No
Remarks :			
Overall Grade	Poor (<70) Satisfactory (70-80) Good (80-90) Outstanding (>90)		
Asst DTs SCORING ABOVE 80% ARE ONLY CERTIFIED (Star rating to be awarded ONLY to certified EDDTs)			
Evaluated by (Name with Appt)	Sig	Sig of K9 Handler	Date of next Evaluation



K9 Augmentation Techniques

29. With emergence of wide variety of K9 augmentation techniques, it makes a sound operational sense that these assault K9s are equipped with additional operational capabilities with K9 Camera Systems, K9 Vision System and K9 Remote Delivery Systems for sure shot tactical advantages. The assault K9s can further be used as an effective tool for search and surveillance through these augmentation products which widely available in the market. With these innovative augmentation devices, the K9 can be directed remotely giving them sense of direction and are proving an effective tactical weapon in fight against terrorism and a GAMECHANGER. Successful participation of such well trained and fully equipped assault K9 teams have taken the NSG ahead of global benchmarks and true leader in this field.

- **K9 Camera System.** The K9 Camera transmits real-time HD and thermal video back to the K9 Handler. Most commercially available systems combine a light sensitive HD camera with a high output IR illuminator to provide enhanced vision in extreme low light environments. In addition to the HD camera, few others also include a thermal camera with Thermal Fusion Technology. Thermal Fusion allows operators to see details and outlines of persons and objects overlaid onto thermal colours. Thermal Fusion is the perfect blend of thermal signatures with HD details. Two-way audio available on the K9 Camera with few products further provides a "Push-to-Talk" feature, allowing handlers to easily listen to and communicate with a K9 or suspect. These are available in head mounted, back mounted and neck mounted versions for an appropriate use.

- **K9 Vision System.** The K9 Vision System is further improvised version of the camera system which is worn like goggles over the eyes of the K9 and transmits real-time video from camera in the middle of goggles. It has front and rear camera and LED illumination and whatever a K9 can sense based on his reaction to any movement/ hide due to his super natural potential, the Handler can see it on to a Tablet or output device. It is available with uniquely developed K9 guidance system which helps in remotely directing the assault K9 by the radio-communication hence there is no need to accompany the K9 which gives the Stack more safety and huge tactical advantage. In NSG, the 'K9 Vision System' has substantially augmented the operational capabilities of the assault K9 Teams for employment for specialised



Assault K9 with Back Mounted Camera System



Assault K9 with K9 Vision System (KVS)



Assault K9 with Canine Remote Delivery System (CRDS)



intervention. By virtue of transmitting live audio-video feed, it can assist in better tactical planning which can always be modified as per operational imperatives. The capability of instructing the assault K9 remotely through the K9 Vision System gives an unparalleled opportunity for the Stack to launch attack and tactically control the assault K9 team.

- **Canine Remote Delivery System (CRDS)**. It is another most innovative product developed to augment the reach of K9s in an operational scenario. It is a dog-mounted article delivery system, remotely as an “underdog” attached to the release mechanism. It comprises of a wireless transmitter carried by the handler, receiver attached to the K9’s body harness, and an equipment pouch- the underdog slung under the brisket of the dog with cobra buckles. CRDS can be usefully applied in the highly sensitive special operations to remotely deliver wide range of articles for tactical advantages by use of K9s. Few applications envisaged in special operations are planting a breaching charge to make an entry in the building for intervention in highly specialized hostage rescue situation, bugging devices near the target to generate surveillance before deciding about the intervention, portable radio frequency jammer before undertaking to neutralize the IEDs, to carry other technical gadgets inside the ‘Hot Zone’ during the active operation like UAVs, portable records or range of articles with the help of K9s and can be of immense use in delivering lifesaving medicines or food items to commandos trapped during the operation. The products vary in operative range based on requirement of the organizations.

Dual Purpose K9s in Bomb Detection-Assault Role (BD-Assault)

30. Now with all the tactical capabilities of intervention and search & surveillance, if an assault K9 can perform the task of bomb detection (BD) in an effective and successful manner, then who would not consider it the **potent TACTICAL WEAPON and a true GAMECHANGER** in our fight against terrorism. The future application of these K9s lies in their multiple ability of superior nose-work and natural instincts to sense an imminent threat and swiftly react to neutralise the situation. Few Special Forces like GIGN ex France, YAMAM ex Israel, MARSOCs and Navy Seals ex US have already started using this dual ability of BD-Assault with Belgian Shepherd Malinois K9s performing this task most effectively.

31. The operational capabilities of ‘**Dual Purpose BD-Assault K9 Teams**’ is an excellent example of employing with vastly augmented proficiency in not only generating the ‘**two-way audio-video surveillance inputs**’ on real time basis for effective planning by the operational commanders but simultaneously launching an assault possibly independently while working on **remotely operated ‘K9 Guidance System**’ to appropriately manoeuvre the tactical movements of the ‘Assault K9’ to challenge the target. Moreover, while the ‘Dual Purpose BD-Assault K9 Teams’ are equally proficient in explosive detection as and when required by the intervention team, therefore, it gives an inherent advantage to any counter terror force or Special Forces to suitably deploy the same K9 promptly, right in the golden moment of the operation without holding up the operation, demanding a BD team, awaiting clearance by the BD team, endangering/risking the life of another K9 Team/intervention team into the operation. Such a ‘BD-Assault K9 Team’ with dual task capability along with ability to provide real-time surveillance inputs together with control over K9 by remote means to guide/direct him towards the target would certainly provide unparalleled tactical advantage and ensure success with ‘Zero Error’ mission mode and ensure least possible damage to own life & property.

Summary

32. K9s have been used in war and various types of anti-terrorist operations both by the military and the police forces around the world, but their effective utilization in hostage rescue and intervention operations



has been actually realised by the Special Forces like NSG. Assault K9 is an amazing additional resource, invaluable asset that can be purposefully utilised by the intervention team to ensure safety and sure shot tactical advantage. Surprise, deception, shock action are key elements of intervention and deploying an assault can immensely support the small intervention team by providing not only search capability but also swift launch and active engagement and distraction of the suspect which gives the team huge tactical advantage and opportunity to fire first and neutralize the target. Use of K9 augmentation techniques can further enhance the effectiveness of these assault K9s by also generating real time audio video feed to better plan an offensive in an unknown territory. While the decision to employ an assault K9 remains with tactical Team Commander, however, presence of well trained and effective assault K9 surely boosts the morale of the team and inspire confidence to overcome unforeseen challenges while moving for the intervention operation. Further, preparation and employment of dual tasking 'BD-Assault K9 Team' is an absolute GAMECHANGER in this fight against terrorism giving huge leverage to the intervention team of applying simultaneous task of leading the assault as well as clearing the way from any potential IED threat while in the middle of intervention operation. While recent employment of an assault K9 during the raid on ISIS leader Abu al Baghdadi by US Forces in Oct 2019 is one such example, however, their successful employment in operations by Indian Forces is just a matter of time and opportunity.

PBOA OF BLAST INCIDENT (04th SEPT 2019) AT TARN TARAN (PUNJAB)



PBOA team collecting and inspecting evidences from the blast site