

## **Goldens in Search & Rescue**

By Flynn Lamont

Welcome to our new section on Golden in Search & Rescue, yes with all that the Golden Retriever does we also have them working in the search & rescue field.

My name is Flynn Lamont and I am the K-9 Manager for “Vancouver Urban Search & Rescue” Canada Task Force I, (CAN TF-I) for short. You may have heard of CAN FT-I as one of the teams that responded to the city of New Orleans and worked in the area of St. Bernard Parish rescuing 119 people of the small community.

CAN TF-1 is an urban search & rescue task force based in Vancouver that has been in existence since 1996. The team is made up of about 90 members from a number of different disciplines, and they include City of Vancouver personal from water works, police department, fire department, engineering, parks, and sanitation. We also have personal from the B.C. Ambulance Service as well as having two trauma surgeons and our own hospital.

Within all our team members we have some specialized training and that includes a very specialized “search team.” The search team is a key component to the USAR program and is divided into two groups, “Technical Search” and “K-9 Search.” Technical search is the pain-staking task of locating trapped victims with the assistance of some very sophisticated equipment such as a “search cam”, a very small but powerful camera on the end of a long adjustable probe that can penetrate into a void space to help locate the trapped victim. We also use a “Delsar” another sophisticated piece of equipment that can be used to hear the faintest of cries by trapped victims.

We also have the ability to deploy search K-9’s and currently CAN TF-1 has five trained K-9’s. Three of our five K-9’s are, you guessed it, Goldens. The Golden Retriever is one of the dogs that are used most often and if you know much about the Golden you will understand why. They have a temperament that is very conducive to work with and searching for humans. Imagine if a dog doesn’t love humans.....why would they go and search for humans, the truth is they won’t.

All of us that have Golden Retrievers know the temperament I speak of, that dog that sits by the tub while you are in the shower, and as you work in the home office on the computer they are nestled under the desk keeping your feet warm. They lay by your feet as you watch Hockey Night in Canada and if you happen to be on the phone when their tummy tells them it's time to eat they will burn a hole in your head with that stare from those big brown eyes. Do you have that dog at home, I do. Two of them and I should introduce them to you.

From Oriana Golden Retrievers comes Barkley, he is a ten-year-old male and is the apple of my eye. Barkley has been with the Vancouver Fire Department for about eight years, he is trained in the location of both "live" and "dead" humans. He has worked mostly in the cadaver field, as there are so few dogs around that do that type of work. Barkley also works for CAN TF-1 and attended most recently with the team on the trip to New Orleans, he has been with CAN TF-1 for about seven years. My expectation is he will retire in the next year or so but as he is healthy and stays fit he may work a bit longer yet.

From Zaneri Golden Retrievers comes a true "Golden" Cooper, he is what we love about the Golden, he is what I love about the Golden. He bubbles over, with personality and the behaviour that makes you laugh. He's not a dog at all. Cooper is five years old and has been with the Vancouver Fire Department for almost four years, he also works with CAN TF-1 and is Barkley's son. Cooper is trained in the location of "live" humans and when you meet him you'll see why, he loves them, all of them. He is so much fun to work with and to get to take your Golden to work is the best.

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