

## GSDCA Outstanding Canine Service award

### SES Dog Seigen Quintessential "Cade" and Michael Margot



As Cade's owner and trainer my tracking history goes back to the early 1990s when I got hooked on this sport with a German Shepherd Dog called Drum. Drum was not what you called a high drive dog; in fact he was anything but. The search was then on for my next dog.

Cade was born Seigen Quintessential on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2003 and started his tracking at seven weeks of age and became the youngest German Shepherd in Australia to obtain his Tracking Dog title in 2003. He went on to obtain his Tracking Dog Excellent Title and Tracking Champion Title.

I joined the State Emergency Service of Western Australia. Cade and I then became members of the Stirling Unit (Tracker Dog Team). At that time the State Emergency Service Canine Section was undergoing changes where new strategies and operational standards were put into place. On the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2009 Cade passed his assessment with the State Emergency Service to become a graded dog and ready for callouts.

The following is an extract of an email I received from the police officer who graded Cade on his final assessment tracks.

*"Yesterday, I assessed a trailing dog handled by Michael Margot on behalf of FESA. They have been developing a training program for some time which uses the scent discrimination style of tracking. The dog works on an individual scent, rather than ground disturbance.  
If you imagine a bloodhound in a Hollywood film whereby the handler puts a scented bit of clothing to the dogs nose, you sort of get the idea. We had three tracks laid. They were laid on hard surfaces in a normal suburban street/s and incorporated 6 - 8 legs, all of which turned on hard surface. The first two were 800 metres long and 14 hours old (fourteen). The third track was 1km long and 6 hours old.  
I don't think the handler would mind me pointing out that the first track didn't go to plan and the dog seemed not to switch on. The second and third tracks were done to perfection.  
I'm sending this out as in the near future this dog will be available to WAPol and other agencies to assist with operational searches. The dog is oblivious to distractions and contamination and can obviously be an asset to us should the conditions not be favorable to our system of tracking.  
  
(This only applies to missing persons, vulnerable persons etc. This doesn't apply to offenders!). As soon as I have notification that the dog is now operational, I shall let you all know.  
Justin"*

The following search incidents were taken from my personal FESA diary

1. This call out was for a missing 17-year-old male.

I received a call out at 1230hrs on 05/03/2010 from the SES Duty Officer but I was requested to first attend the Inspector's office at my place of work before heading off. The Inspector informed me that we would be searching for an absconder and would have armed police with us. Did we still want to go? The answer was yes.

We arrived at the given address in Gidgegannup and reported to the Sergeant who showed me where the scent item was located. Cade scented from a pair of thongs and we proceeded in a North Westerly direction with eight police officers in tow.

Cade was making good ground at a steady rate despite having to climb over four or five fences and deal with a large mob of kangaroos that were keeping a watchful eye on our approach.

I was placing reference points on my GPS when we came across footprints that confirmed the absconder's route. Over a distance of six km we came across two very clear and distinctive prints heading towards the North. We had continued on for a further kilometre when confirmation was received over the radio that the police had received a positive indication from a member of the public as to where the absconder had gone.

We continued tracking until we reached the main road. A local resident had informed one the officers accompanying us that she had advised the police that she had seen a person standing where we were hitching a ride into town.

Twenty minutes later we received confirmation that the absconder had been taken into custody. Cade got to ride in the front passenger's seat and I got to sit in the back of the lockup wagon.

2. This call out was for a missing 9-year-old boy.

We received a call out at 2040hrs on 08/03/2010 requesting our presence to an address in Two Rocks for a missing 9-year-old boy.

We arrived at the address at approximately 2130 hours and reported to the local Sergeant who informed me that he had obtained a scent item, pair of thongs that had only been touched by his mother, and then we proceeded to the front of the property.

I had been allocated two police officers to follow us up so I scented Cade and off we went. We were heading in a westerly direction from the house and ended up on the main road into Two Rocks. Cade was slowing down and changing directions from one side of the street to the other when he came to an abrupt halt at a bus stop. Cade was reluctant to go any further. One of the police officers following up commented that it looks like the boy was picked up from the bus stop, as the dog doesn't want to go any further. The police then radioed back to base to inform them of what had taken place.

I was joined with another member from the canine unit and we were then tasked to clear a couple of areas containing bush. Nothing was found. We were then called to a library area where a previous sighting of the boy was reported. Once again, nothing was found.

Police advised us that they had information that could lead to the locating of the boy at around 0200 hours. We waited for a further 30 minutes for confirmation that the boy had been located. Thanks to Cade's indication at the bus stop, police had contacted the boy's father who, after being informed that they would be bringing down a tracker dog to his house, admitted that he had picked up the boy from the bust stop and taken him to another address where the boy was staying.

We were thanked by the duty Sergeant for providing an invaluable service that cut a lot of search time down by having a good dog. We arrived home at 0345 hours and enjoyed a good night's sleep; well, what was left of the night anyway.

3. This call out was for a missing 86-year-old male.

Received a call out at 1545 hours on 28/11/2010 and arrived at an address in Bayswater at 1640 hours. Doug was my backup on this call out. Steve, from Emergency Operations Unit, met us on site so we could obtain a scent article along with the missing person's details. Cade was scented and we were on our way, it was a very warm afternoon so we were carrying a lot of water for Cade.

Cade followed a scent trail for about three kilometres that was heading towards Leach Highway when we received a radio message to return to base as they had located a dog collar from the missing person's dog at McCallum Park in South Perth.

We were driven to McCallum Park in South Perth where we were then taken to the spot where the dog collar was found. Cade followed the track along the foreshore to the southern side of the Causeway Bridge where we then turned east and headed towards the bus station. We had done a small loop through the streets and had started heading back towards the northern side of the Causeway Bridge when we received a radio call that the Bayswater SES bike team had located the missing man just after the bridge. They said that they looked at which way Cade was heading and decided to take his lead and go on ahead under the bridge. They then located the missing person a bit further on.

We were then taken back for debriefing where Cade was praised for his tracking skills and giving the search teams a direction of travel. The missing person was located at 1930 hours and we arrived home at 2100 hours.

Cade retired from his tracking duties in December 2013 having been a member of the State Emergency Service and Search Dogs Australia Inc. I am still a serving member of the State Emergency Service.



