



RESCUE DOG

## Rescue Dog SIG Riksgränsen Report

The Dog SIG managed their Programme over 3 days with a demo on the Friday.

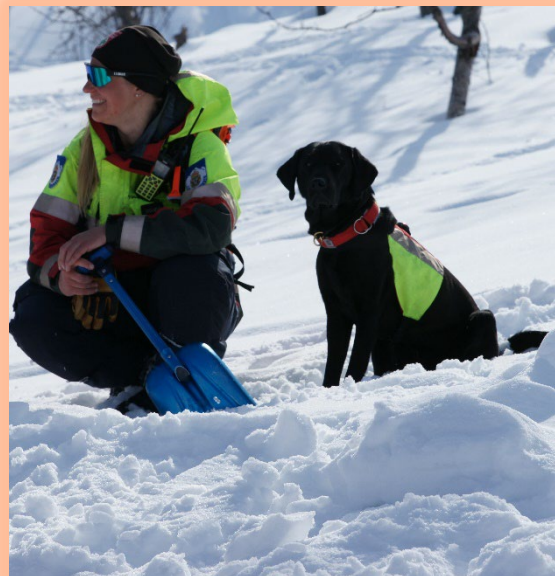
We were privileged to be guided and coached by Marcel Meier head of all Avalanche dog training in Switzerland. He gave of his time and infinite experience generously and all that attended benefited greatly.



Due to geographical restraints we only had two experienced dogs to work with; handled by Ulrika Warvik with German Shepherd Ash and Amanda Nordfeldt with Labrador Retriever Jock. Both teams worked extremely well, showing different styles of searching according to the bred type. Jock fast and direct, Ash calm and deliberate (except when a snow mobile went past!). It would have been great if I had brought my young labrador so we could have collaborated with a novice dog as well, but international travel made this very difficult.

The teams were very well disciplined and effective when the dog had found someone and begun digging. They marked the find with a prob and then helped the dog with digging. Both dogs were excellent diggers, not stopping till completely in the hole with the body and only came out when told by their handler.

Marcel set the search area up according to the Swiss training methods three burial holes in a line with approx. 35 meters between them up the hill mimicking the debris path of an avalanche. Marcel was particular how we built the holes first a man shaped rectangle at least 5ft deep then from this hole digging into the snowpack forming a large cave for body to lie in. I learnt a lot about hole digging. Let's hope Scotland has enough snow to achieve this in future!! This is then easily blocked up using the excavated snow, the body was comfortable and with adequate room for sharing with the dog after finding. The dogs were rewarded with smelly sausage treats.





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On the first day we dug the holes and then used the area over the rest of the week. We started off each day with presentations from Switzerland, Sweden, and Scotland explaining our individual training methods. Also we were able to dip into other presentations in other parts of the Congress.

We had amazing lectures

- **Rescue in Running Water and recovery from extreme body temperature**  
Anna Bagenholm and Torvind Naesheim
- **Identifying and mitigating stress in your dog** Laura McGladry
- **Water Search Dogs** Jorgen Modin (Swedish Police)

On the Friday we gave a demo of how a search of an avalanche with reported missing people would take place in a Swedish ski area. The dog teams arrived by snowmobile and the exercise was controlled by a MR search coordinator with all activity recorded.

I would like to thank our small special interest group for getting involved in Riksgransen and making it such a success and also the other delegates who took time to come and help and watch our on-snow activities.

Thank you Sweden for a wonderful week.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Hunter, SIG Chair

