



Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office



Date: 5/17/2017
Time: 11:15 a.m.

Kelly Hoover
Public Information Officer
(805) 681-4192

News Release

Sheriff's Search and Rescue K-9 Certified and Mission Ready

Santa Barbara - The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Search and Rescue (SBCSAR) team now has a new tool to help find lost people. After more than three years of training, MacGyver is officially certified by the California Rescue Dog Association (CARDA) as Mission Ready in Area Search. The three and half year old, red tri-colored Australian Shepherd is specifically trained off lead to find live and deceased human scent. He can do so generally without a scent article and is able to search in high altitudes and difficult terrain.

15-year Sheriff's Search and Rescue veteran Rick Stein is MacGyver's owner and experienced handler. Stein purchased MacGyver from a breeder east of Sacramento when he was just seven weeks old. The two have been training together constantly ever since. Of the 106 deployable CARDA certified K-9 teams in California, Stein and MacGyver are one of only seven Type 1 certified teams, which means they can search in terrain in areas above 7000 feet elevation.

Stein says having a K-9 search team with this type of experience is vital for Santa Barbara County. He said, "Time is critical when you are looking for a lost or missing person and now we don't have to wait for an outside agency to assist with a K9, we can immediately start searching with our K9. We are also available for mutual aid as a K9 team."

In order to be certified by CARDA as Mission Ready in Area Search, the two needed to be signed off of on a number of skills which required extensive testing in Obedience, Agility, Sociability, Helicopter loading and unloading and Night Search Training. The requirements included finding a hidden subject in a 40 acre brushed/forested parcel within two hours, finding a hidden subject and a large human remains source in a 20 acre forested/brushed parcel within one hour and finding one to three hidden subjects in a 120 acre forested/brushed parcel with a minimum elevation gain of 200 feet within four hours. To get the Type 1 certification, they had to be evaluated for three consecutive days and two nights covering 15 miles with a minimum elevation gain of 1000 feet.

MacGyver is Stein's second Search and Rescue K-9. His first dog, Kody, worked for ten years and passed away when he was 14 ½. Kody was certified in area search and human remains detection and was successful in finding a number of live and deceased people during his career. MacGyver is currently training to become certified in Human Remains Detection and is set to complete the training in the next couple of months.

As a Search and Rescue volunteer, Stein is not paid for his work and in fact has spent more than \$12,000 dollars of his own money for the purpose of securing MacGyver's Search and Rescue K-9 certification. This amount does not include the cost to purchase MacGyver or vehicle expenses. Stein estimates he spends approximately 350 hours a year training MacGyver and travels more than 3000 miles to attend the formal K-9 trainings. Stein says it is a rewarding investment. He said, "Of all the search and rescue activities that I have done, working a K9 is the most rewarding. You and your dog really become synched with each other. It is a wonderful experience. Also as good as a search dog Kody was, I feel that MacGyver is even better and will serve the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team and the community well."

There are five K-9 teams associated with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Search and Rescue team. To find out how you can best support the volunteer team, go to www.sbcsar.net.









###