

How a Police Dog Is Made at Ghent

Methods Followed in the Schooling of Belgian Sheepdogs Could Be Used Successfully With Any Other Breed

By WALTER MUCKLOW

MOST of the readers of the GAZETTE know — assuredly all should know—that the term “police dog” does not indicate any breed, but merely one purpose to which dogs of various breeds can be, and are, trained. Shepherd dogs from Prussia, Russia, Alsace, Belgium and France, together with various breeds of terriers—and various other breeds and half-breeds — have been trained and used as police dogs.

It is as ridiculous to describe any breed of dogs as police dogs as it would be to describe a race of men as lawyers or doctors or merchants. In each case the designation indicates the education or training and not the blood, which, in both cases, is varied.

Regardless of the fact that the Belgian sheepdog is a farm dog, there is no questioning the fact that it can be trained to become an ideal police dog. How this is done forms the basis of an American consular report, written by Harry W. Diederichs, Consul-general at Antwerp, and H. Albert Johnson, Consul at Liège.

While the information applies particularly to the Belgian sheepdog, the way the dogs are trained at Ghent could be followed by fanciers of other breeds who are anxious to have police-trained dogs. According to the report, the training begins when the animal has attained the age of ten to twelve months, before it has contracted bad habits. The character of the animal is first carefully studied. This is done to ascertain whether or not the dog will obey orders when given with kindness.

Violence in training is never resorted to. Each action or movement is distinct and the same words are invariably used when giving the

same command. For example: “Attack” is the order to fall upon anyone who attempts to assault a policeman in uniform. “Heel” is the order to follow close behind. “Down” is the order to cease attacking. “Search” is the order to look for.

THESE orders are given with firmness, without raising the voice too high, and whenever the order is carried out to the satisfaction of the trainer, he rewards the animal with a small piece of boiled liver or some other morsel. A second order is never given until the first has been well understood and properly carried out by the dog.

The exercises are rehearsed daily and are generally terminated by repeating one of the orders for which the animal shows a preference. When the dog shows any ill-will he is scold-



TYPICAL GROENENDAEL

The most distinctive variety of the Belgian sheepdog is this long-haired, often pure black dog

ed; on the other hand, if he shows good-will he is encouraged and rewarded.

However, the dogs are never petted to any extent. The whip is used as little as possible, and only when it becomes an absolute necessity. The animals are never struck more than once. It may be said that the whip is used only on such dogs as are caught doing wrong.

When eight months of age dogs are taken out in leash. They are walked through the most populated districts of the city to accustom them to the traffic and noise. In the country they are let loose and are made to jump ditches, fences, hedges, etc., while being kept near enough to their master to hear his voice. The dog is then taught to sit down and stand up upon command. Orders or commands are always given in monosyllables.

IF the animal, when running from his trainer, does not immediately obey the command to return, or if he shows a hesitancy to do so, he is tied to a cord of about 30 feet in length with a sort of slipknot collar. The command is then repeated, and if



MISTAKEN FOR THE SHEPHERD DOG

Of all varieties of Belgian sheepdogs, the Malinois, a short-coated, brindle fawn, most resembles the erroneously called “police dog.” The author believes that this variety is best suited for America

