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## Cadaver dogs

Cadaver dogs, also known as human remains detection dogs (HRDD), are specially trained canines that assist in locating decomposing human remains. Their training is a relatively recent development in law enforcement, which has transitioned from using dogs primarily for tracking living individuals to incorporating specialized skills for detecting human remains. These dogs play a crucial role not only in crime scene investigations but also in recovery efforts following natural and human-made disasters.

Cadaver dogs are distinguished from other search-and-rescue dogs as they focus exclusively on identifying human remains, rather than finding living persons or other types of evidence. Their training involves recognizing the distinct scents associated with decomposition, including blood and bone. Most cadaver dogs start their training by learning to track living humans, after which they are taught to differentiate between various scents, including those of decomposing flesh.

As their effectiveness has gained recognition, cadaver dogs have also found applications in archaeological contexts, helping to uncover ancient human remains. Overall, these highly trained dogs have become a vital asset for law enforcement agencies, enhancing the capabilities of search-and-rescue operations.

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Full Article

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### Cadaver dogs

**DEFINITION:** Dogs that are specially trained to find the scents associated with human remains.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Although dogs have been used for many years to assist in search-and-rescue operations, the use of highly specialized investigative techniques is a relatively recent development. In the late twentieth century, law-enforcement agencies and dog trainers began to use dogs to search out human remains in addition to the already established use of dogs to find living individuals.

Cadaver dogs constitute a subcategory of search-and-rescue dogs, used by law enforcement officials to find missing people. Cadaver dogs differ from other kinds of search-and-rescue dogs in that they search only for human remains; they are not used to find living individuals. Training dogs for the purpose of finding human remains is a fairly recent development.

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use of dogs. In addition to their use by law enforcement at crime scenes, cadaver dogs are used to find bodies following natural and human-caused disasters.

Cadaver dogs, also called human remains detection dogs (HRDD), receive specialized training in which they are cross-trained for use both in trailing living humans and in detecting the scents of decomposing human remains. These dogs are trained to differentiate among a variety of scents and to recognize the difference between decomposing human flesh and other scents. In addition to identifying the locations of recent human remains, cadaver dogs can detect the presence of bones and blood as well as other residual scents.

Most cadaver dogs are first trained as trailing and air-scenting dogs, which are used in tracking lost and injured people. After their initial training in tracking general scents, they begin their training as cadaver dogs. In this stage, trainers use special chemicals that mimic the smells of decomposing human flesh to familiarize the dogs with the scents associated with human remains. Careful screening is necessary to identify those dogs that are likely to become good cadaver dogs; trainers must attempt to determine the dogs' abilities to track the necessary scents and whether the dogs are attracted to those scents.

The Institute for Canine Forensics and other organizations draw distinctions among different kinds of search-and-rescue dogs. Subcategories of dogs used by law enforcement, in addition to cadaver dogs, include search dogs, area search dogs, trailing dogs, forensic dogs, and water search dogs. In the twenty-first century, archaeologists have also begun using dogs in their work. Some canines have found human remains that are thousands of years old.

As more dogs have been used successfully in new capacities, the idea of using dogs for many law-enforcement purposes has gained popularity. Highly trained dogs such as cadaver dogs have become an indispensable part of many law-enforcement agencies.

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