



## K9 Decoys and Aggression: A Manual for Training Police Dogs (K9 Professional Training Series)

By Stephen A. Mackenzie



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Learn how to:

- Master the basic skills and common procedures every decoy needs.
- Read dogs accurately through seven key factors.
- Stimulate and reward useful forms of K9 aggression.

A good decoy is a K9 trainer's most valuable tool. A good decoy can make a poor dog better, a mediocre dog good, and a good dog excellent. A poor decoy, on the other hand, can have devastating effects, ruining even a good dog.

Stephen Mackenzie, professor of animal science and deputy sheriff with more than 30 years' experience training and handling police dogs, shows you how to master the art of being a decoy in this revised and updated new edition. You'll learn how to communicate effectively with your canine partner and how to stimulate specific types of aggression in the dog in a safe, positive way. This guide is essential reading for all decoys, including both instructors and students. It will improve the effectiveness of all K9 personnel, handlers, and trainers.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

Once again, Dr. Mackenzie provides a complete and in-depth manual for decoys who train police dogs for apprehension work. (John Brannon, President, Shallow Creek Kennels)

This is a must have book for all working dog handlers and trainers. (Susan Bulanda)

#### About the Author

Dr. Stephen A. Mackenzie has been a deputy sheriff for more than 20 years and has been training and handling police service dogs for more than 30 years. A popular seminar instructor, he has testified in both criminal and civil cases as a court-recognized expert in animal behavior. He is currently a professor of animal science at the State University of New York at Cobleskill.

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### **Chapter 1: The Role of the Decoy**

At some point in protection and apprehension training, a person must lure the dog into thinking that he or she is behaving so badly that he or she deserves to be bitten. This person has had many titles over the years. When I first started decoying back in the late 1970s, I was known as an "agitator," since I jumped around a lot and generally got the dogs all excited. Then I found that some people referred to me as a "catcher," since the end result of my efforts was to catch the dog on a protective sleeve. Later, when I started working with sport trainers, people called me a "helper," since my job was to help the dog learn and perfect his skills. Apparently, many of them felt the terms "agitator" and "catcher" were inadequate to describe the scope of the work done. These handles suggest that all the decoy has to do is jump around, annoy the dog, and take a bite in order to do a good job. The scope of the helper's work is, indeed, far beyond that.

At some point in the process of my work someone called me a "decoy," since I was luring the dog into the belief that I was a bad person, a violent criminal, or at least someone who needed biting from time to time. This term has proven to be my favorite in the list, since the decoy not only helps the dog learn but also often uses role deception. When meeting trained dogs for the first time, the decoy performs a valuable kind of dress rehearsal, where the dog thinks the threat is real and the decoy is a stranger. Recently I have heard the term "quarry" used relative to my work, particularly by trainers from the western United States and Canada. It is a good term, but my favorite is still "decoy."

### **A Valuable Tool**

A good decoy is a K9 trainer's most valuable tool. When it comes to aggression work, a good decoy will have a positive influence on the dogs being trained. A good decoy can take a poor dog and make him mediocre, a mediocre dog and make him good, a good dog and make him excellent. A poor decoy can have devastating effects. An excellent dog will become mediocre or worse, as will a good dog. A dog that was mediocre to begin with has no chance at all with a bad decoy; in fact, a bad decoy has the capability to ruin a mediocre dog. In some cases, poor decoys have completely ruined even good dogs. So, the decoy must not

only have skill but must also be a disciplined person committed to working cooperatively with the trainer. The decoy's purpose is to provide the trainer with a human being who behaves exactly as the trainer needs at any given time during the dog's development. Consequently, the decoy must be able to act in different manners and change his or her style quickly. In many instances, the actions of the decoy actually control the training and learning process, and there is a tendency for the decoy to begin thinking that he or she is more than just a tool. This is a trap that all good decoys resist, since there can only be one trainer on the field at a time for the best results. Many trainers, having trouble finding good decoys, and having no desire to argue with the big-headed ones they do have, learn to decoy themselves. They realize that when something is really important, they must be able to do it themselves to control the training process.

### **A Communication Expert**

The good decoy is an expert in canine communication, understands what the dog is saying at all times, and understands what actions are appropriate to fit the trainer's overall plan for the dog. To do this the decoy begins by studying the paralinguistic of the dog until he or she can read dogs well. Then, the decoy must learn how to speak back to the dog, using the same body gestures and behaviors that dogs use to communicate with each other. This, of course, requires the decoy to be in good physical shape and to have timing and coordination--something we will address later.

### **An Aggression Manipulator**

Once he or she is a competent communication expert, the decoy needs to understand the natural forms of aggression in dogs and what behaviors and language will trigger each individual type of aggression. Only then is he or she able to trigger the particular form of aggression the trainer desires at the correct time and avoid triggering aggression when the trainer is trying to do control work.

So, in a nutshell, the following describes the good decoy. He or she: reads dogs well; is in excellent physical shape; can speak the dog's language; uses his or her physical skills to trigger or develop different forms of aggression at the proper times; and can avoid stimulating aggression when it is not appropriate.

Decoying is a precise skill that requires physical ability and mental discipline. If you desire to prove your courage or are trying to impress people, please stay away from decoying. Eventually you will do something foolish and get hurt, but worse than that, you will hurt a dog, either physically or mentally. If you need to prove yourself, take up something like bungee jumping or sky diving and do us all a favor by leaving dogs alone.

### **Users Review**

#### **From reader reviews:**

#### **James Sharpton:**

This book untitled K9 Decoys and Aggression: A Manual for Training Police Dogs (K9 Professional Training Series) to be one of several books this best seller in this year, honestly, that is because when you read this reserve you can get a lot of benefit onto it. You will easily to buy this specific book in the book retail outlet or you can order it via online. The publisher of this book sells the e-book too. It makes you

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**Billy Anderson:**

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