

Pupdates

Pupdate: A Pup Leaves the Class

For our K9 trainers, it's imperative that the dogs enjoy the job they're doing. Sometimes, even when a pup tests well and they successfully learn how to detect explosive odors, they make it clear that being an explosive detection K9 is not the life for them. Such is the case for one of the fall 2017 "puppy class" pups.

We are sad to announce that Lulu has been dropped from the program.

A few weeks into training, Lulu began to show signs she wasn't interested in detecting explosive odors. All dogs, just like most human students, have good days and bad days when learning something new. The same is true during our puppy classes. A pup might begin acting lazy, guessing where the odors are, or just showing a general disregard for whatever is being taught at the moment. Usually it lasts for a day, maybe two.

There can be a million reasons why a particular dog has a bad day, and the trainers become doggy psychologists trying to figure out what will help the dog come out of its funk. Sometimes the pup is bored and just needs extra playtime or more challenges, sometimes the dog need a little break, and sometimes it's a minor medical condition like a food allergy requiring switching to different kibble. After a few days, the trainers work the pup through whatever issue has arisen, and the dog is back eagerly and happily ready to continue training.

But for some dogs, like Lulu, it becomes clear that the issue isn't temporary. Instead, this just isn't the job they are meant for. Lulu was no longer interested in searching for explosives. Even when they could motivate her with food and play to search, she was clearly not enjoying herself any longer. Our trainers' top concern is for the dogs' physical and mental well-being, so they made the extremely difficult decision to do what's best for Lulu and drop her from the program.

When a dog is dropped or retires from our program, their handler or handler's family is given the chance to adopt them. Every handler, of course, chooses to do so. The dogs are their partners and have become members of their family, even after just a few weeks of training together. Lulu was adopted by her loving handler, who had the chance to work with her during imprint training. She now enjoys her days playing with his kids, sniffing out rabbits and squirrels in the backyard, and eating meals and snacks out of a dog dish. We'll miss Lulu, but this was the right decision for her. We wish her all the best in her new life.

PHOTO of Lulu happy at home

Lulu was adopted by her handler, but he still needs an explosive detection K9 partner at work. Check back tomorrow **to meet the newest addition** to the fall 2017 puppy class.

If you miss any of the articles in this series, visit **“Follow CIA’s New Puppy Class!”** main page, where we are chronicling the puppies’ progresses throughout their training.

Pupdate: A New Pup Joins the Class!

Yesterday, we announced that Lulu was no longer with the CIA Explosive Detection K9 Training Program. Her handler adopted her and she's now living the life of a pet dog, being spoiled by him and his family.

Lulu's handler, however, needs a K9 partner for explosive detection work. The puppy class was still in the imprint stage of training when Lulu left the program, so our K9 instructors decided to bring on a new pup and try to catch her or him up to the rest of the class.

We'd like to introduce you to the newest member of CIA's fall 2017 "puppy class"...

Meet Heron!

PHOTO

Heron (aka "Harry") is a male black lab from Susquehanna Service Dogs. He's a goofy, high energy fella who loves to jump and play. At just over a year old, he's the youngest pup in the class, but has an incredible drive to learn and is super smart. Harry's got a lot of work to do to catch up to the ladies, but our training staff is ready to put in the extra time and attention it will require.

3-4 PHOTOS of Harry

Follow Harry and the rest of the class's progress, as they finish imprint training and start advanced training with **their new handlers**.

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Pupdate: Training the Handlers

The pups have finished their imprint training and have officially been paired with their human handlers!

The CIA handlers in this class are all “retreads” – handlers that have had a previous K9 partner. In fact, the handler’s current K9 partners are retiring on the same day their new K9 partners graduate! As always, our handlers or their families adopt the veteran dogs, who will live out the rest of their lives as treasured family pets, being pampered and spoiled by their human families.

The first week of classes for the new K9-handler teams are spent in the classroom. The handlers take advanced classes on subjects like firearms and explosives, as well as emergency veterinary care for dogs. The classes are taught by experts in their fields, and provide hands-on experiences for the handlers.



Caption: Boston, a senior yellow lab belonging to a guest lecturer, keeps a close eye on the new handlers as they practice K9 CPR on fake dummy dogs. This is just one of the many things the handlers learn during their emergency K9 crisis care classes.

What's next for the new K9-handler teams? As the pups begin their advanced training, they'll apply everything they've learned so far in **simulated exercises**.

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