



Photo by Maj. J G Bombard | USAF

WORLD'S FIRST VIRUS DETECTION K9, "UZI"

By Maj. J G Bombard | USAF

"Every great story starts with three important elements: The Ordinary World, a Question and always an answer, this answer would be [YES]."

Well in the ordinary world, present day being 2020, we have found ourselves faced with a Pandemic which has affected everyone, and by that, I mean the world! Our world has faced a number of challenges over the centuries from; plagues, pandemics, and illnesses that still have no cure (like cancer) but, there have been a number of great characters (heroes) in our history who have stepped up and attempted, and in some cases succeeded in assisting with the severity of these problems on mankind from being much more deadly. Two such people are Duane Pickel and Jeff Minder who both reside in Tallahassee, Florida.



Duane Pickel and his canine George the amazing cancer sniffing Schnauzer



Duane Pickel a retired USAF SAR specialist has been a professional K9 trainer/handler since the Vietnam War, but, in 1994 he began to train his Schnauzer named George to hunt for cancer; melanoma to be exact. George was a part of an experiment to seek out human

cancer cells in or on a human, as the experiment went on, George and his trainer would be successfully detecting the cells which were housed in a plastic tube at an astounding 99% success rate. When the time finally came for George to put his skill to the test, the trainer Duane Pickel said, "Show me", George lifted his paw and gently touched the spot on the patient. A lab would run a test and would confirm it was cancer. Pickel said, "In more than 40 trials over more than a year my dog, George had finally reached 100% accuracy." Duane told me "dogs are trained to hunt drugs, bombs,

corpse, even missing humans, so if the item the dog is needed to find has a scent, the dog can be trained to find it."

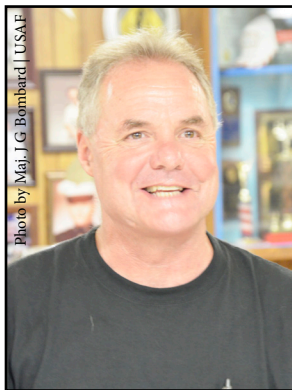
Duane Pickel who still loves to work with K9s, joined Top Tier K9, which has three locations; Madison, FL., Tallahassee, FL., and Valdosta, GA and is owned and op-



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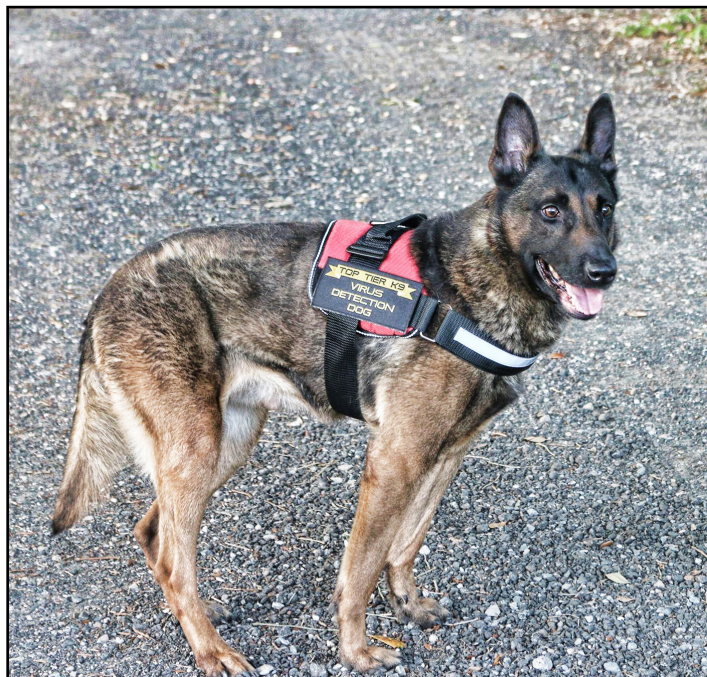
Jeff Minder and his Belgian Malinois, Uzi perform hunt exercises for spectators in the parking lot of the VFW - Tallahassee, Florida where him and Pickel first meet

erated by CEO/Founder Jeff Minder, who retired from the USAF as a SERE instructor and served in Iraq. Minder has built a dream team of professional people to help reach his goals at Top Tier K9. Minder offers a training school to teach K9s and humans to get along and work together as a team using a system known as the Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy, a process that takes a person step by step from knowledge, comprehension, application and analysis levels of learning helping the future trainer to advance as far they desire to advance, while maximizing the potential and minimizing the investment in time, energy and cost. Jeff is no stranger to hard work, having been a project manager, he uses the tools and knowledge he has to advance Top Tier K9 into a new future of Canine training.



Minder seeing a need to perfect the dog training world, applied for a trade mark making his brand of professional trained K9s unique, hence the name, "Foundation Dog®"; Minder says "these dogs are taught in three phases, for 12 weeks the art and science of "obedience, tracking, nose work (scent detection) and protection (bite work)". Minder also added, "once the phase three training is completed, the dog can move on to phase four which is finishing, teaching the dog what the handler needs the dog to do."

As I began this story, I told you there would be three elements that would make this a GREAT story, well you have met the first element of the story, The Ordinary World, dog training at its best, now for the question. The world has changed basically over night with the COVID-19 threat, and the issues we have been facing with the need of PPE, testing and vaccine. What if as in Duane Pickels contribution to science I told you that Jeff Minder has also through pure determination and using his ability to tackle this issue like a project manager would, was able to get a dog to identify the protein

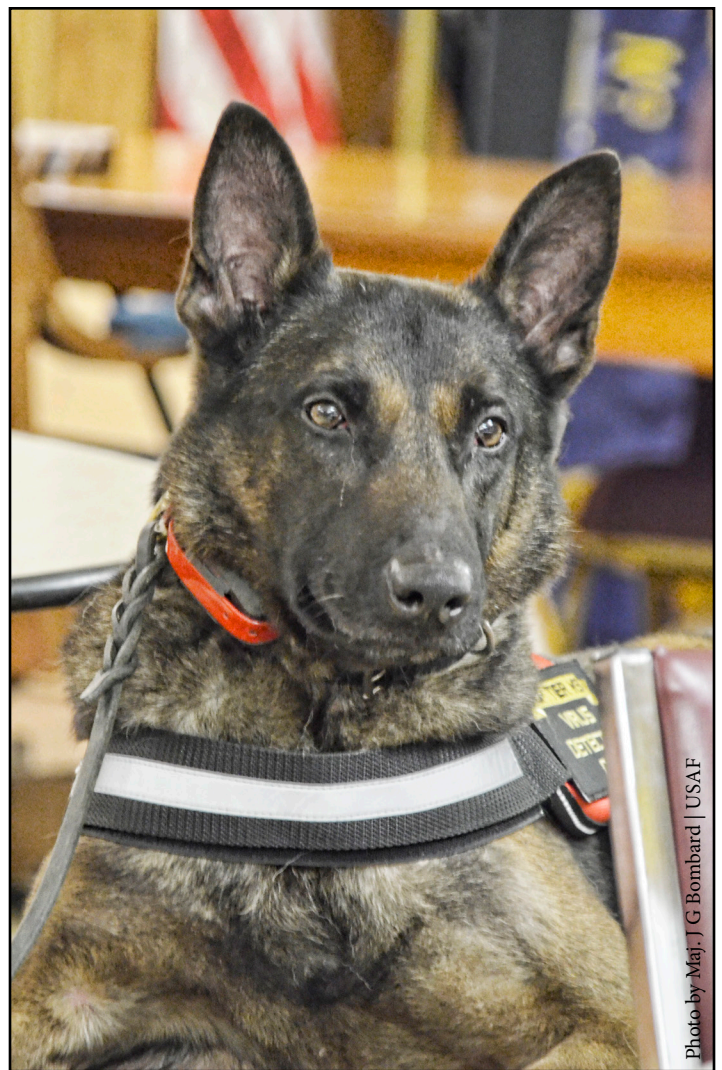


The Belgian Malinois known as Uzi, ready to take on the mission of defeating the COVID-19 virus.

spike within the virus, detect it, alert to it and show his handler where the threat was through science? Minder says he has a tube of distilled water which contains COVID-19 virus and has been using it to train his beloved working dog "Uzi" a Belgian Malinois to detect the virus at a 95% success rate. Minder says, "the origins of the virus is classified at the moment, but, I have it and we are using it to train the Worlds First COVID-19 Scent Detection Dog." Minder also goes on to tell me, "we have Hospitals, Airports, Churches and some business contacting us, needing our services to sweep their locations to make sure it is safe for patrons and workers." Minder also said, "We are currently training three other Foundation Dogs® as we speak, and another 20 dogs to follow, quickly". Minder claims, "it is my hope that my dogs and school will be able to assist in the defeating of this virus to make it safe for life to return to some form of normal."

So there you have it, the three elements have been met as promised, in my opinion as a trained and educated Officer of the USAF, I believe [YES], a canine has the ability to fulfill the claims that Minder and Pickle have made in this story, and that following the science as we understand it, a canine can, has and will be able to assist in defeating this invisible enemy.

For more information about Top Tier K9, their school, and Foundation Dogs® you can visit their website at www.toptierk9.com.



Uzi, is the first K9 known to indicate on the COVID-19 virus in a controlled setting with a 95% success rate.