

alg K9 CONFERENCE

February 1st-4th, 2025



NUTRAMAX[®]
LABORATORIES
VETERINARY SCIENCES, INC.



A little housekeeping!

- Firearms are required to be secured in patrol vehicles or in the gun lockers provided. ABSOLUTELY NO LIVE AMMO IS PERMITTED DURING THE CONFERENCE UNLESS OTHERWISE APPROVED BY STAFF!



- Dogs are to be always leashed when out of kennels/crates, unless otherwise directed or approved by staff. Please break dogs only in approved areas and pick up after your dog with the provided rake and shovel.
- Please listen to the trainers' instructions and directions. They are here to keep everyone safe both during scenarios, and throughout the conference. If **INDEX** is called, cease training scenario immediately and secure your canine unless directed otherwise.
- When entering or exiting a building or room remember to call "Dog in, Dog out". Dogs unexpectedly meeting one another is not typically a happy incident.



A note from Sgt. Witherspoon:

I cannot tell you how grateful we at Answers in Genesis are that you have come to train with us. If this is your first time attending our conference, or if you are a repeat guest, then we want you to know that we look forward to learning just as much from you as you learn from us. I have always encouraged students to learn as much as they can, take every idea and concept and put it in your toolbox. It may not always work or be applicable to your situation, but if it is in the toolbox, it is available should you need it. That's what I intend to do with each of you. Take every idea and put it in my toolbox.

Also, AIG Dept of Public Safety makes no effort to hide who we are. We care deeply about your working relationship with your dog and want to do everything we can to help you improve as a K9 team. More importantly though we care about you as an individual. God created all of us in His image. Due to our sin, and we are all sinners, Romans 3:23-24. 23. "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24. being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" we are condemned to spend eternity separated from God. Jesus Christ however took our punishment on the Cross. Our most sincere prayer is that if you don't know Jesus Christ as your savior, come and talk to us. We would love to share with you the Good News of the Gospel, which grants us eternity with God in heaven.

So, let's get to some great training, enjoy some great food, fellowship, and learning, and I look forward to meeting and getting to know each one of you.
In His Service,

-Sgt Adam Witherspoon



Answers in Genesis 2025 K9 Conference.

February 1st-4th, 2025.

Master of Ceremonies – Chief Darin Powell.

Conference Coordinator – Tyler Bennett.

Schedule

Saturday 1st:

- 1400-1900hrs – Sign in, registration.
 - **Answers Center lower level.**
 - **Free to roam Ark.**
- 1900hrs – Welcome talk. (**Chief Darin Powell.**)
 - **Answers Center lower level.**
- 1920hrs – Walking tour of locations.
 - **Witherspoon, Chief.**
- 2000hrs – Final meeting.
 - **Answers Center lower level.**
 - Expectations, rules, questions.
 - Schedule for conference.
 - Assignments.
- 2030hrs – Close for day.

Sunday 2nd:

- 0800hrs – Breakfast and talk.
 - Speaker – **Ryan Rought**
 - *“Dealing with Burnout”.*
- 0930hrs – Stations.
 - **Will be assigned.**
- 1230hrs – Lunch and testimony.
 - **Answers Center lower level.**
- 1330hrs – Stations.
 - **Will be assigned.**
- 1630hrs – Final meeting.
 - **Answers Center lower level.**
- 1700hrs – Close for day.
- 1800hrs – **Special dinner hosted by Nutramax.**



Monday 3rd:

- 0800hrs – Breakfast and talk.
 - Speaker – **Dr. Prater.**
 - “K9 First Aid & Care”.
- 0930hrs – Stations.
 - **Will be assigned.**
- 1230hrs – Lunch and testimony.
 - **Answers Center lower level.**
- 1330hrs – Stations.
 - **Will be assigned.**
- 1630hrs – Final meeting.
 - **Answers Center lower level.**
- 1700hrs – Close for day.

Tuesday 4th:

- 0800hrs – Breakfast and talk.
 - Speaker – Adam Witherspoon.
 - “Satisfying the Drive.”
 - “Q&A Discussion”
- 0930hrs – **STRESS TEST!**
 - **Answers Center Auditorium.**
 - **Mrs. Gruppen oversees lineup.**
- 0930hrs – Stations.
 - When not running stress test, or when queued up for test.
- 1230hrs – Lunch and testimony.
 - **Answers Center lower level.**
- 1330hrs - **STRESS TEST!**
 - **Answers Center Auditorium.**
 - **Mrs. Gruppen oversees lineup.**
- 1330hrs – Stations.
 - When not running stress test, or when queued up for test.
- 1600hrs – Final meeting.
 - Graduation ceremony.
 - Awards.
 - Stress Test.

- Memorization.
- Instructor voting for best attitude/improvement/spirit.
- 1645hrs – Final remarks.



Getting to know all about you:

Adam Witherspoon (Answers in Genesis):



Sgt. Witherspoon is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces where he served in the Army reaching an E4 rank. He also worked for



the Rockingham County Sheriff's Department as a Deputy. Adam has 30 years of experience training dogs. He used to run his own successful business back in North Carolina, training dogs for professional and personal use, until he sold that and moved to KY to work for Answers in Genesis. He joined AiG in 2015, when, at that time, he took over the in-house canine department. AiG's canine department has grown to 7 dogs, with 7 full-time handlers. AiG has 6 explosives dogs, and 1 narcotics dog. All dogs are also trained in article search and recovery, with a couple of dogs being trained for dual purpose tasks including patrol and tracking.

Ryan Rought (TACTICA):



Ryan Rought is the founder and director of TACTICA Ministries. TACTICA is a non-profit organization that serves the public safety community and their families in the United States and Latin America. TACTICA's ministry headquarters is currently based in San José, Costa Rica, where Ryan and his wife Gretchen live. For 17 years, TACTICA has been equipping law enforcement officers with tactics, leadership, ethics, and a warrior mindset. Ryan has earned a master's degree in law enforcement leadership from Liberty University. Prior to directing TACTICA, Ryan served 12 years at Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety on the SWAT team, as well as the KDPS training division sergeant; Ryan also served 11 years in the U.S. Army Infantry. Ryan is a man fervently committed to his Christian faith, his family, and serving others. His energy is contagious as he is unashamedly committed to investing in the public safety community through high quality training, relationship building, and Gospel centered teaching.

Marty Buffenbarger (Concilium):

Marty Buffenbarger has been married to Carolyn for 41 years. They have 3 adult children and two grandchildren. Marty served 12 years with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department before spending 23 years with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. During those 35 years Marty was assigned to the Crime Scene Unit and FTO @ KCSO and was assigned to the Drug unit as an investigator and Sergeant, K-9 handler, SWAT team, Street Crimes Unit and retired as a Sergeant in the Service Division @ KDPS. As a K-9



team member Marty judges both USPCA and NAPWDA certifications. As a 22-year-old Deputy Marty found what he had been searching for all his life, even when he didn't realize it. Marty had lived for himself for the first 22 years of his life but now understood that to be the best at anything you want to do you must have a peace that goes beyond any human understanding and that can only be found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Marty has served on 20 short-term mission trips with TACTICA. He and Carolyn served full time with TACTICA in Costa Rica for 2.5 years. Marty has been the Global Security Advisor for CTEN, a mission agency, since September 2017 and the Course Manager for Concilium, a missional security firm since March 2018.

Sergeant Shawn Sordyl (Genesee County Sheriff):



I have been with the Office of Genesee County Sheriff for the past 17 years. I have spent time in the patrol division, paramedic division, field training division, and 8 years in the K9 division. I worked with 3 dogs during that time, all dual-purpose explosive dogs. I am currently the senior patrol sergeant, overseeing all the offices patrol contracts and school contracts. I am a team leader for our crash team, and a member of our tactical entry team.

Bill & Cindy Gruppen (Association of Baptists for World Evangelism [ABWE]):

and have been married for 15 years. Together, they are blessed with seven adult children, an adorable granddaughter, and are eagerly awaiting the arrival of their grandson this December! Bill's diverse background spans law enforcement, firefighting, EMT, and the nuclear utility field, where he served in roles such as Security, Safety, and Fire Marshall. For 9 years, they served with TACTICA Ministries, participating in short-term trips to Costa Rica and Ecuador to teach Tactical Medicine courses. In November 2022, Bill and Cindy transitioned into full-time ministry, becoming missionaries and taking on the roles of Director of International Security and Crisis Management for ABWE and Director of TACTICA SOG. Their mission is to share God's good news through creative and impactful avenues.



abwe

Sean Dooley (Villa Hills Police Department):

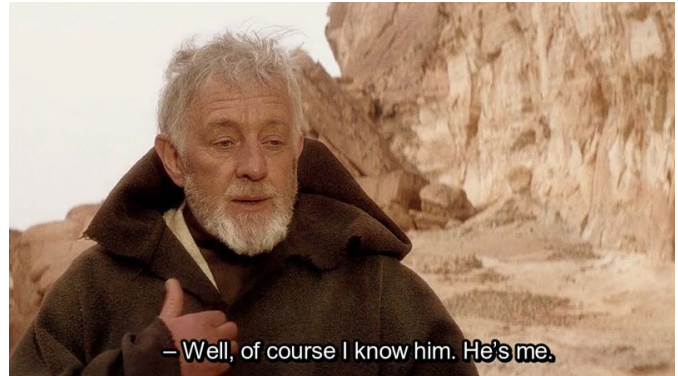


Dooley has Officer been with his wife Felicia Dooley for 19 years and married to her for 11. He and Felicia have two beautiful daughters, Madison and Hadley. Dooley has been a police officer for the Villa Hills Police department since October 2016 where he started his career in Policing. He comes from a background of growing up training hunting dogs with his father and grandfather.

Officer Dooley was assigned to the K-9 unit in January 2019 with K9 Onexx. The team has credited dozens of apprehensions of violent criminals. The team has also

credited hundreds of narcotics related arrest. He is the recipient of the Villa Hills Police medal of valor in 2021 and the (NAPWDA) North American Police Work Dog Association medal of valor in 2021.

Officer Dooley was assigned as a (TFO) task force officer to the FBI Safe Streets Task Force from March 2022-March 2023. He was also assigned as an Agent to the Northern KY Drug Strike Force in March 2022 to the present day. His primary job is investigating drug traffickers in the Northern KY area and dismantling (DTOs) drug trafficking organizations.



Officer Dooley started his journey to become a certified trainer through (NAPWDA) North American Police Work Dog Association in June 2022 and has since credited over 200 hours towards his certification with NAPWDA Master Trainers.

Officer Dooley is a man of faith and a firm believer of leading others by example. He is recognized for critical thinking, leadership, compassion, community relations, and his loyalty.

Chris Carpenter (Livingstone Security Solutions):



Chris Carpenter is the chief security officer and owner of Livingstone Security Solutions, LLC, which provides training and safety services for churches, schools, businesses, civilians and police departments. He provides training for the public safety officers of the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum (Answers in Genesis) and he has partnered with TACTICA Ministries on numerous training missions over the years.

Chris earned a BA of Biology at the University of Louisville and spent 20 years as a police officer for a city in Kentucky where he obtained the rank of lieutenant before retiring. 18 of his law enforcement years were also on the SWAT team where he was a team leader.

He was born and raised in Kentucky where he still lives with his wife of 23 years and four daughters. When he is not training or working with other ministries, Carp can be found working on his farm with his girls and smoking a pipe.

Moriah Hatfield (Conifer Canine/Grit & Grace Malinois):



Growing up in a dog trainer's home, I knew at a very young age that I wanted my career to be with dogs. I started working alongside my dad training dogs when I was 8 years old. My apprenticeship in dog training continued till I pursued a Master Trainer Certification in my mid-teens. I have



been professionally training dogs since then (including but not limited to behavior/obedience, service dog, security, patrol, detection, and SAR). I am now also an instructor at Conifer Canine's Dog Trainer College and an online course teacher there as well.

Alongside my sister, Melody, I co-manage Grit & Grace Malinois, where we raise and train Belgian Malinois for working purposes.

I am passionate about scent work, including detection and trailing, as well as apprehension work with reliable obedience!

Melody Hobelman (Conifer Canine/Grit & Grace Malinois):



I grew up surrounded by the world of dog training, following in my father's footsteps from a young age. I started training dogs alongside him when I was just eight years old. Through my teen years, I worked hard to earn my master dog trainer certification, eventually graduating with honors.



Today, I'm deeply involved in our family business, Conifer Canine, where I work as a trainer and instructor at our Dog Trainer College. I also am involved in our Belgian Malinois breeding program, Grit & Grace Malinois.

Over the years, I've trained a range of working dogs, including police K9s, service dogs, personal protection dogs, detection, and trailing dogs. I'm especially passionate about training working dogs and love watching the bond that forms between a handler and their K9 as they develop together as a team. There's nothing more rewarding to me than seeing that partnership grow. Getting to do what I love every day is something I don't take for granted, and I'm grateful to play a role in helping dogs and their handlers reach their full potential.

Tim Miller (Conifer K9):

I have had a passion for dogs as far back as I can remember. That passion has bloomed into a full-time career training dogs (particularly working dogs) and training dog trainers. I have logged countless hours in training dogs, nearly 10,000 hours in teaching trainers, and have been involved in training hundreds of police K9s. One of my favorite sayings regarding dog training is, "There is always a *best* approach that will create less problems for the dog and produce a better final product." I have also spent over 30 years in breeding/raising/training German Shepherds...striving to give the breed a brighter future with genetic diversity, unquestionable temperament, and abundant health. I am the owner of Conifer K9 and its Dog Trainer College. I look forward to working with your team!



Mike Seguin (Police & Professional Dog Association):



Mike Seguin is the President and a Founding Member of the Police & Professional Dog Association (PPDA) and Co-Owner of Discreet Drug Detection. With 20 years of experience as a Master Trainer, Handler, Certifying Official, and Consultant, Mike has devoted his career to promoting excellence in K9 team training and performance.

He has certified and worked with hundreds of law enforcement K9 teams, consistently striving to uphold and establish the highest standards in the field. Known for his practical and effective approach, Mike's certifications integrate real-world scenarios and emphasize common sense to prepare teams for success.

A firm believer in the power of collaboration, Mike's philosophy is rooted in sharing ideas, resources, and expertise to continually elevate the profession. Guided by his unwavering faith, he embraces the belief that with God, all things are possible.

Sgt. Raul & Heather Roman (Collier County Sheriff's Office):

Sgt. Roman has 29 years of law enforcement experience and is currently a Homicide Unit Supervisor with the Collier County Sheriff's Office in Naples, Florida. Before that, he was a canine handler for 17 years, where he worked 4 canines, all dual purpose trained. Of those 4, 2 were explosives/patrol, and 2 were narcotics/patrol. He remained there until his promotion to Sergeant. Prior to that, he worked for 6 years as a patrol deputy/corporal.



He has been married to his bride Heather for 30 years, they have two adult children and are grandparents of one boy! He and his wife lead a program called *Prepare and Enrich*, which is designed for young couples looking to get married or for married couples that are struggling through issues.

His first and foremost passion is Loving God & his family. His other passions include serving with TACTICA, where he has been on multiple mission trips to Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, and now the USA. He also has a heart to serve the men in his church via men's groups and events.


Sergeant Eric Sawyer (Twinsburg Police Dept.):



Sergeant Eric Sawyer was born in Canton, Ohio. He enlisted in the United States Air Force and completed USAF Basic Training at Lackland AFB, TX, in 1995. He then completed Ground Combat Skills and the Air Force Security Police Academy at Lackland AFB, TX, and was assigned to F.E. Warren AFB, WY, in January 1996. There he controlled entry and provided security to Minuteman III Nuclear Missiles while supervising the transmission of classified information necessary for entry into Missile Launch Facilities. In October 1997 he instructed a two-week course on Security Responsibilities for Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile Operations.

Sergeant Sawyer enrolled in the Military Working Dog Handler course at Lackland AFB, TX, in May 1999. He then completed the course as a distinguished graduate, and was assigned to Bolling AFB, DC, in August 1999. There his duties included Military Law Enforcement, K-9 patrol, and explosive detection for the 11th Wing, Naval District of Washington, United States Secret Service, and Local Law Enforcement agencies. In May 2001, he was transferred to the Pentagon, Washington DC, and continued work as Desk Sergeant and Mobile Patrol, providing security to the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

Sergeant Sawyer separated from the Air Force in August 2001 and Joined the Air Force IMA Reserve program. In September 2001, he was recalled to active duty and assigned to Wright Patterson AFB, OH, and performed security details for Flight Line Operations and protection of the National Airborne Operations Center. In August 2002, Sergeant Sawyer was hired by the City of Twinsburg Police Department, OH, and completed the Ohio State Highway



Patrol Police Officer Academy Columbus, OH. Upon completion he was assigned to the Patrol Division. In May 2003, He was selected for the Summit County Metro SWAT team, serving for 11 years. There he performed duties as Less Lethal and Chemical Agent member, Explosive Breacher, Sniper, and Team Leader. In November 2012, he became the region 5 Director of the Ohio Tactical Officers Association. In April 2014, he was promoted to Patrol Sergeant and held that position for 10 years before retiring in June of 2024. In December 2024 Sgt. Sawyer accepted a position as a school resource officer for the City of Twinsburg.

Sergeant Sawyer currently holds training positions in Firearms, Less Lethal Impact Projectiles, OC Pepper Spray, Critical Incident Response, Church Security, Active Shooter and Intruder Response for Schools, and is a Certified Prevention Specialist through Ohio Crime Prevention (OCPA). Sergeant Sawyer is married to Kathryn Sawyer, and they have five children; Joshua-19, Samuel-16, Luke-15, Gabriel-13, and Sarah-12.