



TRACKER SCHOOL



GEORGIA K9 NTC, LLC THE TRACKER SCHOOL™



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CONCEPT

THE TRACKER SCHOOL

The Tracker School was the very first of its kind in the United States. Its roots trace directly to the U.S. Army's Combat Tracker Team (CTT) Program, which operated from 1966 to 1972 during the Vietnam War.

Our founder, Jeff Schettler and his son, Shayne Schettler, trained under Combat Tracker Team veterans Frank Merritt and David Layne to develop a tactical tracking system for modern law enforcement that was both safer and more effective than traditional methods. Building on the lessons learned by the Army's legendary trackers, Jeff and son adapted their proven principles to meet the realities of contemporary law enforcement operations.

In 1998, Jeff conducted his first tactical tracking class, laying the foundation for what would become the nation's first school dedicated exclusively to tactical tracking for law enforcement. Since then, the program has trained countless military members, US and Nato, law enforcement officers and SAR K9 teams, continuing the legacy of the Combat Tracker Teams while advancing the art and science of trailing/ tracking and tactical tracking for the modern era.

Since 2013, Georgia K9 National Training Center (GAK9) has provided Combat Tracking instruction to U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) units, the US Army, The Marine Corps, Air Force, and Nato Units. Since 1998, we have trained law enforcement agencies in tracking and trailing throughout the United States, Europe, Central and South America, and Asia.

Today, GAK9 operates training facilities in USA: Georgia, North Carolina, and Idaho, France: Lyon, delivering world-class instruction in trailing/ tracking, tactical tracking, manhunting, and K9 operations to military and law enforcement professionals.

GAK9 was established in 2005 and is a veteran owned, family run business operated by Jeff, Shayne, Flery, and Quiana Schettler.

LOCATIONS

THE TRACKER SCHOOL



Georgia K9 National Training Center (GAK9) maintains a global network of **95 certified trainers across 17 countries**, supported by **three dedicated training facilities**. Our primary training centers are located in **Georgia, North Carolina, and Idaho** in the United States, with our European headquarters based in **Lyon, France**. This international footprint enables GAK9 to provide standardized, mission-focused K9 training and certification programs to military, law enforcement, government, and civilian organizations worldwide.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objective

Provide professional K9 training in the disciplines of Trailing, Tracking, and Multi-Purpose Canine (MPC) Combat/Tactical Tracking to qualified military, law enforcement, and government organizations. Training is delivered at our dedicated training facilities or through mobile, on-site instruction tailored to the operational needs of the requesting agency.

Goals

Develop K9 handlers who are both technically proficient and tactically competent in the disciplines of trailing and tracking. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates will possess the knowledge, practical skills, and operational confidence required to effectively deploy their canine teams in real-world law enforcement, military, and government missions. Through a combination of classroom instruction, hands-on field exercises, and scenario-based training, handlers will learn to apply proven trailing and tracking techniques while integrating sound tactical principles that enhance safety, efficiency, and mission success.

Training Solution

Our training programs combine classroom instruction with extensive practical application to ensure students master both the science and tactics of operational tracking.

Training includes:

- Classroom instruction utilizing professionally developed PowerPoint presentations.
- Video analysis and after-action reviews.
- Hands-on field exercises with trained trailing and tracking dogs.
- Progressive scenario-based practical training.
- Final practical evaluation and certification.

Student Lodging

Comfortable on-site lodging is provided at no additional cost. We can accommodate classes of 1 to 10 students. Each residence includes:

- Fully equipped kitchen
- Full bathroom
- Laundry facilities



PHASE 1 OUTLINE

Basic Trailing & Tracking Course for Military, Law Enforcement, and SAR

This is our foundational Trailing and Tracking program and the industry's first K9 imprinting course designed to take a dog from initial trailing imprinting in a rural environment to operational urban trailing in just two weeks.

Developed from the proven methodology outlined in Jeff Schettler's book, *Two Weeks to Operational Tracking*, this intensive program establishes a solid foundation for both the canine and handler. Students progress through a structured curriculum that builds the dog's confidence, drive, and problem-solving ability while teaching handlers the techniques necessary to successfully read, manage, and deploy their K9 partner.

Training begins with rural imprinting exercises, where dogs learn the fundamentals of human scent discrimination and trail commitment. As the course advances, teams are introduced to increasingly complex environments, culminating in operational scenarios in urban settings that incorporate contamination, hard surfaces, distractions, and tactical considerations.

By the conclusion of the course, handlers and their dogs will have developed the fundamental skills necessary to continue advanced trailing and tracking training or begin operational deployment, depending on the team's experience and organizational requirements.



Week 1 Day 1:

1. Morning fire trails
2. Afternoon modified fire trails
3. Concentration on free trailing where possible
4. Determination of reward systems
5. Using taller productive source and intro to scent articles

Day 2:

1. Morning trails with subject already gone aged 10 minutes
2. Afternoon trails adding turns and distance
3. Reducing productive source but maintaining soft surfaces

Day 3:

- 1. Morning trails; adding age and distance
 2. Afternoon trails; continuation of morning exercises
 3. Vary productive sources and water crossings
 4. Introduce runaway during reward
 5. Calling the proximity alert

Day 4:

- 1. Intro to road crossings
 2. 2 road crossings
 3. 3 Road crossings
 4. 4 road crossings
 5. Calling the proximity alert

Day 5:

- 1. Intro to island hopping
 2. Curbs and edges
 3. Mixing it up
 4. Intro to minimal contamination and distraction

Week 2 Day 1:

- 1. Island hopping to contamination and distraction
 2. Increasing stimulation levels during tracking

Day 2:

1. Adding human and animal cross tracks

Day 3:

- 1. Increasing hard surface
 2. Scenting off fixed objects
 3. Tracking to a car pick up

Day 4:

- 1. Walk back finds and moving subjects
 2. High finds

Day 5:

- 1. Stairway to Heaven

PHASE 2 OUTLINE

Adding the Team: Tactical Tracking

Introduce the Tactical Tracking Team into the tracking operation while systematically desensitizing the K9 to team movement, spacing, and close-proximity personnel. Training emphasizes maintaining tracking focus in a team environment while developing reliable proximity alert behaviors to indicate the presence of hidden or evading subjects without compromising the team's tactical position.

A. Team Elements

- 1 Coverman responsibilities and interaction with K9
- 2 Flankers responsibilities and interaction with K9
- 3 Tailgunner responsibilities and interaction with K9
- 4 Team leader command and control

B. Communications

- 1 Hand & arms signals
- 2 Radio and other comms

2. Team Movements

B. Low Threat

- 1 Ranger File/ column formation
- 2 Wedge formation
- 3 Echelon left and right

C. High Threat

- 1 Y Formation
- 2 Line Formation
- 3 Bounding overwatch

D. Contact

- 1 Call-outs
- 2 Flanking
- 3 Pincer
- 4 Rabbit hole

E. Ambush

- 1 Fight through
- 2 Retreat
- 3 Counter ambush

PHASE 3 OUTLINE

Phase 3 is designed to develop tactical tracking teams capable of locating, pursuing, and apprehending actively evading subjects in complex operational environments. Building upon the technical tracking skills acquired in previous phases, students learn to integrate tracking with sound small-unit tactics and mission planning.

Training places heavy emphasis on counter-SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape) techniques and counter-ambush operations. Students are challenged through realistic force-on-force scenarios that require them to identify and defeat evasion tactics, detect and respond to ambushes, maintain tactical security, and safely close with and capture the objective. Upon completion, graduates will possess the knowledge, skills, and confidence to conduct tactical tracking missions against determined and adaptive adversaries.



1. Terrain & Distance

A Terrain

- 1) Wooded
- 2) Varied water conditions
- 3) Swamp & Marsh
- 4) Sand, dirt, and mud

B Age & Distance

- 1) 1 hour, 1 mile
- 2) 2 hour, 2 miles
- 3) 3 hour, 3 miles

2. Back & Cross Tracks

A Basic & Intermediate

3. Scent Pools

- A Live Scent Pools
- B Dead Scent Pools

4. Multiple Subjects & Ambushes

- A 1-5 Subject ambush
- B Ambush with IED's

All tactical exercises are conducted using UTM and Unit Solutions training weapons platforms, including the M4, M240, AK-47, and Glock 19. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) are realistically simulated using pressure plates, remote detonators, tripwire-activated devices, and flash-bang training simulators to create operationally relevant scenarios.

For the safety of all participants, no live firearms or live ammunition are permitted during any training exercise. All trainees are subject to strict safety protocols throughout the course. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including eye, face, and other required safety gear, may be provided or required for all personnel participating in force-on-force and tactical training exercises.

PHASE 4 OUTLINE

Train-the-Trainer Program

The **Train-the-Trainer Program** is a 10-day advanced instructor development course designed for graduates of **Phases 1–3**. This course prepares experienced handlers to become certified GAK9 instructors capable of teaching the Georgia K9 trailing system to future students.

During the course, trainees receive in-depth instruction on the **Phase 1 Basic Trailing Course**, with an emphasis on trailing imprinting methodology, lesson planning, instructional techniques, student evaluation, and coaching skills. Every exercise from Phase 1 is revisited from the instructor's perspective, allowing trainees to master not only the technical aspects of trailing but also the ability to effectively communicate, demonstrate, and correct those skills in a structured training environment.

Shadow Phase

Following successful completion of the instructor course, trainees enter a **5-day Shadow Phase**. During this practical evaluation, each trainee is assigned a new handler and is responsible for teaching the rural Phase 1 trailing imprinting curriculum under the direct supervision of a certified GAK9 Trainer.

The instructor candidate must successfully train the new handler and canine team from initial trailing imprinting through **Level I Field Trailing Certification**, demonstrating proficiency in instruction, problem-solving, student evaluation, safety, and adherence to GAK9 training standards.

Successful completion of both the Train-the-Trainer Course and the Shadow Phase qualifies the candidate as a certified GAK9 Trainer authorized to teach the Phase 1 Basic Trailing Course in accordance with established GAK9 doctrine and standards.

All Trainees must pass the following online certifications via the TTTK9 University: Trailing Theory, Trailing Imprinting, Scent Evidence, Tactical Tracking. An 80% passing rate is required for each exam.

The Train-the-Trainer (TTT) Certification Standards are designed to objectively evaluate a K-9 team's ability to locate a specific individual through scent discrimination tracking and trailing. This certification assesses only the team's ability to identify, follow, and successfully locate the correct human scent source. It does not evaluate other working dog disciplines, including obedience, apprehension/protection, detection, or area search.

Certification is conducted in four operational environments:

- Field/Woods
- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban

Each environment contains four progressive certification levels:

1. Handler
2. Specialist
3. Expert
4. Master

This progressive certification system encourages continual development and recognizes increasing levels of proficiency in scent discrimination tracking and trailing. Each level must be successfully completed before advancing to the next. Certification is results-oriented and measures only the team's ability to locate the designated subject. The evaluation does not judge the dog's style, behavior, or tracking methodology while working the trail.

K-9 teams are not required to remain directly on the suspect's exact footpath, as human scent patterns naturally disperse and shift based on terrain, weather, vegetation, wind, and other environmental factors. Teams must, however, maintain a generally parallel direction of travel consistent with the suspect's route. Area search techniques or casting for scent outside the intended track are not permitted during certification.

Trail age and distance are established as operational guidelines rather than absolute measurements. Because certification scenarios are conducted under realistic field conditions, exact trail distances and travel times cannot always be duplicated. Every effort will be made to adhere to established standards while allowing for environmental and operational variables.

GAK9 pioneered the use of double-blind testing models for scent discrimination tracking and trailing certifications. Under this system, neither the handler nor the evaluating instructor knows the identity or route of the designated subject. This methodology eliminates unintentional cueing, produces objective and repeatable evaluations, and more accurately reflects real-world operational deployments. The result is a certification process that measures true canine capability and consistently produces more reliable field performance.

Tactical & Trailing Equipment Needed

- *Comfortable dog harness
- *Long lead 20-30 foot
- *Stout dog collars
- *Portable water containers, camel packs are best
- *At least two pairs of boots you can run in-SEE BELOW!
- *Loose pants that can take some abuse
- *Rain gear
- *Personal first aid kit
- *Sunscreen
- *Flea and tick products
- *Small red lens flashlight or headlamp. LED is the best-brimmed hat
- *Gloves that allow you to shoot
- *At least one box of sterile 4X4 gauze pads
- *At least one box of zip-lock baggies.
- *Shooting glasses clear or amber.
- *Any medical item you might need in the field
- *Knife or utility tool.
- *Small spool of para-cord.
- *Small fire starting kit or wet/dry matches.
- *Protein bars or similar fast snack with calories
- *Communications if you plan on operating as a team w/o hand and arm signals.
- *Camel Pak or Hydration Pack.

Your boots must be appropriate for the environment in which you will be training. Courses conducted in areas with water, marshes, or swampland will almost certainly result in wet feet. Boots that do not drain water effectively will remain saturated, requiring frequent changes of socks and increasing the risk of blisters, hot spots, and other foot injuries.

If you are not accustomed to long-distance trailing, understand that you can expect to walk and jog between **4 and 12 miles per day** over uneven terrain. Your boots must be fully broken in before attending the course. Wearing them around town for a day or two is not an adequate test. Instead, train in them by walking and running long distances over varied terrain to ensure they provide the comfort, support, and durability required for extended operations.

Of all the equipment you bring, **your boots are the single most important item.** The wrong footwear can quickly turn an excellent training experience into a miserable one. Take the time to select quality boots, break them in properly, and confirm they perform well in the same types of terrain you will encounter during training. Your feet will not forgive poor footwear choices.

Tactical Field Training Requirements

All personnel participating in Tactical Field Training Exercises (FTXs) shall wear camouflage uniforms appropriate for woodland or jungle environments. Black, urban gray, blue camouflage, or other non-natural color patterns are not suitable for field operations. Remember that during FTXs you will be treated as a tactical target. If your camouflage does not blend with the environment, you significantly increase your chances of being detected and engaged.

Because all FTXs simulate live-fire tactical operations, **no personally owned firearms, live ammunition, or other lethal weapons are permitted in the training area.** The only personnel authorized to possess live firearms or ammunition are designated TTT instructors and training staff.

Students are encouraged to wear the same duty equipment they would use during operational rural manhunts, including duty belts, holsters, load-bearing equipment, helmets, body armor, and other mission-essential gear. Holsters may be worn; however, they must remain empty unless otherwise directed by training staff.

Prior to each FTX, inspect all personal equipment to ensure it is serviceable and mission-ready. Bright or reflective surfaces should be covered with tape, paint, or other suitable materials to eliminate unwanted glare. Loose straps, buckles, clips, and other equipment that may create unnecessary noise should be secured or taped down.

A simple test is to put on your full field gear and jump up and down. If your equipment rattles, jingles, or shifts excessively, additional preparation is required. Noise discipline is essential during tactical tracking operations.

The same standards apply to your canine's equipment. Inspect collars, harnesses, leads, and any attached accessories for loose metal components or items that create unnecessary noise. A noisy dog can compromise the entire team's position during tactical operations and negatively affect mission success.





Scheduling & Tuition

GAK9 Schools are offered **by reservation only**. Due to high demand, courses are typically booked **6–8 months in advance** to secure preferred training dates.

Training is conducted with a **maximum student-to-instructor ratio of 3:1**, ensuring individualized instruction and maximum hands-on training. Ten-day programs include a **two-day break** between each five-day training block.

- **Tuition:** \$3,500-\$4500 USD per student with K9, per five-day training block.
- **Multi-team discounts:** Reduced pricing may be available for agencies registering multiple K9 teams.
- **Reservation Deposit:** A **50% deposit** is required to reserve training dates.
- **Final Payment:** The remaining balance is due on or upon arrival.
- **Deposit Policy:** Deposits are **non-refundable**, but may be transferred to a future training date with prior approval.

Off-Site Training

Mobile training programs conducted at a host agency's location are designed to accommodate larger class sizes while maintaining a lower level of instructor supervision. Call or write for a quote.

- Maximum **student-to-instructor ratio: 5:1** (USA).
- Up to **three observers without K9s** may accompany each instructor.

Deposit Requirements

- **United States:** A **50% non-refundable deposit** of the total course cost is required to reserve training dates.
- **Europe:** A **30% non-refundable deposit** of the total course cost is required to reserve training dates.

Georgia K9 NTC, LLC, GAK9, is a veteran and family operated company incorporated in the State of Georgia.

Jeff Schettler is the CEO and founder of GAK9. He is a retired law enforcement K9 handler who served with the City of Alameda Police Department and the Amador County Sheriff's Office in California. Jeff is a certified military instructor and graduate of the prestigious **U.S. Army Drill Sergeant School (Leadership Academy)**, where he received advanced leadership and instructional training. During his law enforcement career, he was selected to assist the **FBI Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) K9 Assistance Program**, where he spent two years supporting high-risk fugitive apprehension operations. The program focused on locating and capturing dangerous fugitives using specialized K9 tracking and trailing teams. Jeff is the author of five K9 Training books.

Shayne Schettler serves as the General Manager of Georgia K9 National Training Center (GAK9), where he oversees the facility's daily operations and manages law enforcement K9 training programs. Having been involved with working dogs since 1994, Shayne developed his passion for canine training alongside his father, gaining decades of experience in the field.

Shayne earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from Westminster College and a Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of San Diego. Before assuming leadership of GAK9's operations, he served with the U.S. Department of State at the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel.

Today, Shayne combines his operational leadership, instructional background, and lifelong experience with working dogs to ensure GAK9 maintains the highest standards in law enforcement K9 training, facility management, and student support. His commitment to professionalism and operational excellence helps provide an exceptional training environment for handlers and agencies from around the world.

Flery Schettler is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in the Philippines with more than two decades of experience in accounting, finance, and business management. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Accountancy from the **University of Negros Occidental–Recoletos** in 1998.

Before relocating to the United States, Flery served as the Head of the Accounting Department for the **CitiHardware Group of Companies**, where she played a key role in overseeing financial operations and strengthening the company's accounting systems. She was responsible for financial planning, budgeting, accounting, reporting, compliance, and ensuring the organization's overall financial health and operational efficiency. This leadership position marked a significant milestone in her professional career.

She currently serves as the **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)** of **Georgia K9 National Training Center**, where she oversees all financial operations.

Quiana Schettler was born and raised in the Philippines. She completed her Junior High School education at **Precious International School of Davao** before earning her Senior High School diploma from **Malayan Colleges Mindanao (A Mapúa School)** in 2020. She graduated under the **Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM)** strand.

Quiana serves as the Head Trainer at the Georgia K9 National Training Center's Canton facility, where she oversees the day-to-day training operations for all kennel dogs preparing for careers in law enforcement. She is responsible for ensuring each K9 progresses through a structured training program while maintaining the highest standards of performance and reliability.

Quiana's primary training specialties include canine behavior and obedience, tracking and trailing, tactical tracking, and detection. Her experience in developing working dogs emphasizes clear communication, consistent training methods, and operational readiness, producing dependable K9s capable of performing in demanding real-world environments.

With a strong commitment to excellence and a passion for developing high-performance working dogs, Quiana plays a vital role in preparing law enforcement K9 teams for the challenges they will face in the field.



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