

# A job like no other.

Mazar-e Sharif at Potsdam, 12.01.2010 - Bundeswehr.

“Danger” hesitates for a moment, a signal barely noticeable to the untrained observer. For Sergeant Michael S. however, the brief moment has served its purpose. “There is something here”, he shouts to his comrade, Sergeant Timo S. “We will need to send Frani over the ground again.”



“Danger” and “Frani” are no ordinary dogs – they are **Belgian Shepherds**; sniffer dogs trained to detect explosives and weapons. Sergeant Michael S. and his friend Timo P. are their handlers.

Both belong to the Military Police Company located at Camp Marmal, in Mazar-e Sharif. *“If the dog detects something”* explains Sergeant P., *“then he remains motionless and fixed in place.”* “Danger” is then withdrawn from the area by his handler. *“And if the chance is there is something then we do a double check and will send a second dog over the suspected site.”*

## Safe investigation



Things that need investigating are not lacking these days. Sergeant Kai K. and Sergeant Major Martin G. are there to ensure proper procedures are followed on the so-called IED plate, where items can be safely examined to detect explosives or other dangerous substances. The two men are part of the Facilities Group for Weapons Removal, the host squadron for Mazar-e Sharif. They also have two dogs in service and regularly practice on the IED-Plate. *“Once a week, the Afghan bazaar at Camp Marmal gets supplied with new products,”* said Sergeant K. *“Then we must examine the goods and the vehicles of the dealers.”* This is a routine task which is also supported by the Military Police Dog Force. *“Because with four dogs things go faster and don’t place as much strain on the individual animals”* explains Sergeant K.

## Two areas of Activity



*“Compared with the dogs of the explosive disposal ordnance, our mission is different,”* said Sergeant P., a military police dog handler from his home command in Mainz. The main difference between the sniffer duties is that the special services military police dogs detect all manner of used or extinct weaponry whereas the weapon’s dogs specialize only in explosives. *Our dogs search and find long-term investments,”* said Sergeant K. This term refers to explosives that have already been stored over a long period of time. The dogs are trained for both sniffer duties as well as for personal protection.

Back on the IED's it is "Frani's" turn to discover something. She sits motionless and fixated in front of a box. Normally tubes with explosives inside are used as test objects and dog handler Timo S. is satisfied, explaining how they always reward the dogs when they find something. *“The dog must always be a winner at the end,”* he says. When the dog finds something they may be rewarded by a game with their favorite ball or with the handler, who has to explode with enthusiasm to show the dog he has done a good job. *“In this situation it’s party, party, party”*, says Sergeant K. Then it’s back in the crate to wait for the next job.

