



PHOTO: MICHAEL BRUCE

Under the watchful eyes of his handler, Police Constable Flawie Ryan — one of the specially trained narcotics sniffer dogs named Rex attacks a "gunman" in a demonstration exercise held yesterday during the formal commissioning of the Canine Academy at Tucker Valley, Chaguaramas.

High hopes for new Canine Academy

Dyzal Gonzales
ggonzales@trinidadexpress.com

ON AT least four occasions last year sniffer dogs pressed into service to find the bodies of missing people failed because of a lack of training.

It is however hoped that the newly formed Canine Academy which was commissioned yesterday will help alleviate this problem, bringing some measure of closure to families who will be able to finally pay final tribute to missing/feared dead relatives.

Case in point is teenager Adha Pixie Lakhan of

Spring Trace, Siparia, who disappeared in March 2005. Days after, sniffer dogs from the K9 Unit based in Caroni were detailed to search for her body but failed. Relatives, however, mounted a search party of their own and her body was found about 100 feet from where she was last seen alive.

On hand to commission the new Canine Academy based at Tucker Valley, Chaguaramas, were National Security Minister, Martin Joseph and Police Commissioner Trevor Paul.

In his feature address, Jo-

seph remarked that the dogs (one set belonging to the Police Service and the other the property of the Customs and Excise Division) are now competent in the detection of narcotics, explosives and crowd control.

However, he said, "as the academy expands under the guidance of Consolidated Services International (a US-based private defence contractor) and the continued support of the US Embassy—special attention will be paid to the following important disciplines as additional training will be required in explo-

sive detection, tactical narcotics detection, cadaver detection (which is going on now), arson detection and search and rescue".

The revamped canine project began in July 2005 with the dogs being put to the test later that month following the first of four bombings in and around Port of Spain.

"It is my belief," said Joseph, "that a team in possession of such strong capabilities will be able to effectively assist our law enforcement agencies in restoring a much-needed sense of safety and security to our populace."