



How to build up an avalanche dog school



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Our department of Arges, in Romania, has a 25 years old official relationship with department of Savoie, in France, one of its components being the cooperation on mountain rescue.



There are many similarities in the alpine landscape between Savoie, the land of Mont Blanc and Arges, the land of count Dracula.



Transylvanian Alps, the area where we fulfill our duties, is part of the Carpathian range, with a length of more than 1000 km only on Romanian territory.



Our mountain rescue base, at 2000 meters elevation, is the center of avalanche training and snow study in SALVAMONT. We have 30 beds capacity and we organise here avalanche trainings and recently, avalanche dog training sessions.



Maitre-chien
d'Avalanche
Savoie

In 2012, at our request, has been established that Savoie to donate an avalanche dog to Arges, with all the stages towards brevetting, because, until than, in case of necessity, we were asking for canine units from the army, police or gendarmerie, when it was needed.



These canine units from police or army, unfortunately, there were not able to reach the demanding areas anytime, being composed out of handlers and dogs used with the mountains only at tourist level (in most cases not even that).



More than this, all these institutions didn't have real avalanche dogs, but mainly surface searching or man trailing dogs.





And avalanches
usually don't happen
near the parking place...

Hydrologic Year	France	Austria	Switzerland	Italy	Germany	Slovenia	Liechtenstein	Poland	Slovakia	Czech Republic	Bulgaria	Croatia	Romania	Norway	Great Britain	Sweden	Ireland	Spain	Andorra	USA	Canada
83-1984	28	41	41	20	6	0	0	6	0	5	6	-	3	0	2	-	-	5	2	12	4
84-1985	45	40	55	33	7	2	1	5	0	13	0	-	5	4	0	-	-	8	-	13	8
85-1986	40	43	34	27	2	7	0	1	0	0	0	-	4	22	4	-	-	4	-	17	9
86-1987	20	31	15	16	3	1	0	4	-	-	0	-	0	7	2	-	-	1	-	21	12
87-1988	24	37	24	38	0	0	0	5	0	4	1	-	9	4	0	-	-	-	-	8	7
88-1989	17	14	16	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	3	4	0	-	-	7	-	6	6
89-1990	22	12	28	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	6	3	0	-	-	4	-	8	9
90-1991	47	20	38	38	8	1	0	0	0	1	0	-	1	1	1	-	-	21	-	8	12
91-1992	28	9	13	10	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	-	2	4	0	-	-	6	-	24	6
92-1993	23	23	28	24	3	0	0	1	0	4	1	-	2	1	0	-	-	2	-	29	12
93-1994	23	13	21	24	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	1	-	-	-	-	13	8
94-1995	23	24	20	12	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	3	6	3	6	-	-	6	-	28	15
95-1996	44	37	17	9	3	6	0	5	4	0	2	0	4	2	0	-	-	2	-	30	10
96-1997	23	27	24	13	4	0	0	5	2	0	4	0	2	4	0	0	-	4	-	22	16
97-1998	35	11	13	14	0	1	0	2	5	2	2	0	2	6	-	0	-	0	0	26	21
98-1999	44	50	36	12	3	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	2	1	5	0	-	-	3	32	16
99-2000	28	39	20	16	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	6	-	2	-	0	0	22	10
00-2001	28	22	32	29	1	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	9	9	2	1	-	-	-	33	12
01-2002	29	17	24	7	3	0	2	2	5	-	-	-	0	4	2	0	-	-	-	35	13
02-2003	25	8	11	22	3	0	0	9	6	-	-	-	7	4	-	1	-	3	-	30	29
03-2004	26	8	11	22	0	2	0	9	6	-	-	-	8	4	-	1	-	3	-	23	11
04-2005	25	16	19	19	3	0	0	6	6	-	-	-	5	4	-	0	-	4	-	28	9
05-2006	57	22	24	23	6	2	0	2	7	3	-	-	1	2	-	2	0	0	4	24	8
06-2007	11	22	24	15	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	5	-	0	-	-	-	22	7
07-2008	29	29	11	17	1	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	4	-	0	-	6	0	36	18
08-2009	38	23	8	11	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	-	0	0	28	26
09-2010	41	30	29	45	3	7	0	6	6	2	4	-	2	10	5	0	0	6	-	36	12
10-2011	22	23	23	13	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	-	-	-	26	11
11-2012	22	18	19	9	1	1	0	1	-	0	0	0	0	7	-	1	0	2	-	34	10
12-2013	36	26	22	28	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	8	-	0	4	1	1	24	5
13-2014	20	11	22	23	2	0	0	0	1	0	-	0	0	9	0	-	0	1	1	35	15
14-2015	45	33	33	30	0	0	0	5	1	1	3	0	0	6	1	0	0	1	0	11	8
TOTAL	982	821	791	642	78	47	4	84	67	34	21	3	89	162	26	9	0	98	9	744	375

In the statistics Dale Atkins realised, gathering data from all over, Romania has 89 people dead in avalanches since 1983, being among first ten nations in this black list of death casualties, with 2,78 dead people/season. The largest avalanche with dead casualties in our country is 23 dead skiers, but this is not included here, hapening in 1977, before the start of this statistics.



Thus, in April 2013, I've started training with Helios, a Border Collie of six months at that time, which has been pre-formed by a French team, composed from Lionel Blanc(†) and Guy Anciaux.



In France, the avalanche dogs are brevetted under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, through ANENA (Association Nationale pour l'Etude des Neiges et Avalanches) who is organising the stages.

The system of qualifying to the final school in Deux Alps, consists of three eliminatory evaluations during the year, so me and Helios managed to pass all of them, being among the 20 canine units qualified for the final stage, out of 38 candidating teams.





I have to say that I had to pass through the caudine forks of the French monitors, reluctant in foreigners, but I proofed that Romanian mountain rescuers are made of the same material French mountain rescuers are made of...



In December 2013, for three whole weeks we were working in Deux Alps at the final stage and managed to be in the 18 canine units (out of 20) who obtained in that year, the National Brevet for Avalanche Canine Unit, issued by the French Ministry of Internal Affairs, through ANENA.



BREVET NATIONAL DE MAITRE-CHIEN D'AVALANCHES

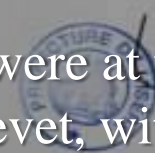
*Le ministre d'état, ministre de l'intérieur, de l'outre-mer des collectivités territoriales et de l'immigration,
VU le décret n° 77-12 du 4 janvier 1977 modifié instituant un brevet national de maître-chien d'avalanches ;
VU l'arrêté du 5 janvier 1988 modifié relatif aux conditions d'obtention du brevet national de maître-chien d'avalanches ;*

VU le procès-verbal de la session d'examen pour la délivrance du brevet national de maître-chien d'avalanches qui s'est tenu le 18 décembre 2013 aux Deux-Alpes, sous la présidence de Mme Bernadette SORACE.

Délivre le présent diplôme à

*M. SANDULOIU ION né le 31/01/65
et son chien HELIOS - BORDER N° 2HCP283
Fait à GRENOBLE, le 18 décembre 2013*

*Pour le ministre d'état, ministre de l'intérieur
de l'outre-mer des collectivités territoriales et de l'immigration
et par délégation,
Pour le Préfet et par délégation
Le chef de service interministériel des affaires civiles et économiques de défense
Et de protection civile*



As our monitors said, me and Helios we were at that time, the first non-French canine unit who got the French brevet, with only one observation: my dog has a French passport.

BNMCA n° 777



Unfortunately, only a week after the end of the school, Lionel Blanc died in an avalanche, near Refuge du Grand Plan, which was in his administration.



At return, being the chief of the avalanche commission in **SALVAMONT** (our national mountain rescue organisation) and also being a certified trainer, I proposed to the board to start organising our own avalanche canine units schools, in respect of ICAR's avalanche commission recommendation

AVA-REC0012 issued 19950924

In our country, our national SALVAMONT association is enabled by law to qualify the mountain rescuers and their additional specialties.



So, a new specialisation appeared
in our mountain rescue:
avalanche dog handler.



We benefited once again of the help of our French colleagues from French Federation of Avalanche Dog Handlers, who intermediates the buying of two training air sacks at their discounted price, so we were ready



In February 2015 was set the first avalanche dog school in SALVAMONT.



The Romanian avalanche dog schools are under the same strict rules as the French “mother school”.



We only introduced more, the alpine access, for assuring the access everywhere, but also to strengthen the bonds between the young dog and its handler.



In this moment, in Romania there are eight certified avalanche canine units, for the next school in February 2017, competing another six candidate canine units.





The enthusiasm of my dog handler colleagues is at a high quota, even if they encounter the same difficulties as in any other country: hard to convince some of our colleagues to help in training, so we still work on mentalities.



But, there are also lots of people, enthusiastic about their new colleagues...





So, we proudly wear the badge of the new specialisation in SALVAMONT: avalanche dog handler!



Merci Savoie!

Merci ANENA!

Merci France!

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