

# IRIS SNIFFS OUT FIRST PLACE

**Congratulations to Explosive Detector Dog Iris and her handler LCPL Joey Tawhara who took out first place in the Explosive Detection category at the National Police and Detector Dog Championships held in Upper Hutt recently. Also representing NZDF and taking out fourth place was SPR Maylin Broderick with dog Bok.**

Competing against handler teams from NZ Police and Aviation Security the NZDF teams had to complete a range of different tasks over an intense three day period of competition.

Iris is a recent addition to the NZDF, having recently graduated from ten weeks of explosive detector training, and has only been working with LCPL Tawhara for about three weeks – quite the achievement – while Bok has been with NZDF for 18 months. Both dog and handler team showed the high calibre of skill they possess in order to successfully compete at the highest level in New Zealand.

“Iris is a strong dog, so even though she is young and only newly-trained I was hoping she would do well but I didn’t expect us to win. She worked so well under a lot of pressure,” said LCPL Tawhara.

“The hardest thing about the competition is it is timed, so you have a large area to search but only limited time. This is where the dog and handler partnership is so important. It is my job as the handler to take a systematic



approach with the dog to the search and it is her job to take me to where the explosive is located. It was a tough competition and there wasn’t much between the teams in points.”

NZDF Explosive Detector dogs are an NZ Army capability based within 2 Engineer Regiment at Linton but available for deployment throughout New Zealand and overseas. The dogs are trained to find explosives or Improvised Explosive Devices and a dog and handler team is one of the fastest ways to search a large area. The dogs are extremely accurate at locating any explosives, which is proved by Iris and her win at this competition.

Iris is from the first litter of Labradors bred by NZ Police Breeding Programme for the NZDF. It is hoped Iris will be the mother to the first litter of puppies in a combined NZDF and NZ Police breeding programme starting soon.



Iris with handler LCPL Joey Tawhara.

