

## Customs Canine Teams Amongst T&T's Crime Fighting Elite

# K9



Graduating class with  
Senior Instructor and Director,  
Anthony Picgano (*centre left*) and  
Senior Instructor, Corporal Blades (*centre right*).

## Customs Canine Teams **K9**

Shurwaine Winchester's "Who Let the Dogs Out" was the theme song of the K9 Academy's Graduation on 6th June 2008.

Thirteen teams comprising six officers from the Customs and Excise Division and seven officers from the Prison Service, and their canine partners graduated after an intensive sixteen-week training period, which commenced on 7th January 2008.

The Customs and Excise Canine Teams were instructed in the detection of cocaine, heroin and marijuana, in various types of conveyance typical to the Customs environment including containers, motor vehicles and vessels.

"The trainees had the opportunity to participate in actual anti-narcotic trafficking operations,"

says Mr. Dexter Robertson, Officer-in-Charge at the Customs Canine Enforcement Unit.

The operations were conducted in conjunction with officers from the Customs and Excise Marine Interdiction Unit and the Organised Crime, Narcotics and Firearms Bureau in locations from Chaguaramas to Tobago.

Since the establishment of the K-9 Academy in May 2006, there has been a significant increase in arrests and seizures in Trinidad and Tobago. According to Mr. Fitzroy John, Comptroller of Customs and Excise, "The Academy has standardised canine training in Trinidad and Tobago and has facilitated a synergy between Customs and Excise, the Police and Prisons Service in the use of trained canines in law enforcement and corrections operations. This

standardisation and the cross-training of the canine teams augurs well for inter-agency cooperation as we expand our pool of specialised canine teams, which can be deployed in any area of the crime-fighting arena."

He noted that these six new additions to the Customs and Excise Canine Enforcement Unit will serve to strengthen our interdiction efforts at the various ports throughout Trinidad and Tobago and we expect to utilise them fully as part of our routine operations.

1. Mr. John delivers an address at the graduation ceremony.
2. Mr. John and Mr. Chandler pose with the Customs graduates and their instructors.
3. A Customs Canine Team simulates a passenger examination.
4. Mr. John presents one of the graduates with her certificate.
5. Guests are seated at the pavilion for the graduation ceremony.
6. Mr. John presents one of the graduates with her certificate.

