

Introduction

THIS IS A FIELD MANUAL, not a pretty book to adorn a coffee table. It's a how-to book about training the pointing bird dog breeds. Carry it with you as part of your training gear and refer to it often.

Its main "voice" is that of Maurice Lindley, a remarkable man who gets remarkable results from the many hundreds of bird dogs he has developed as a professional trainer.

His list of notable winners in competition includes *Fiddler's Gizmo*, *Seldom Home Major*, *Seldom Home Belle*, *Commander's Big Buck*, *Starwood Acres -Dottie*, and *Commander's Casey Jones*.

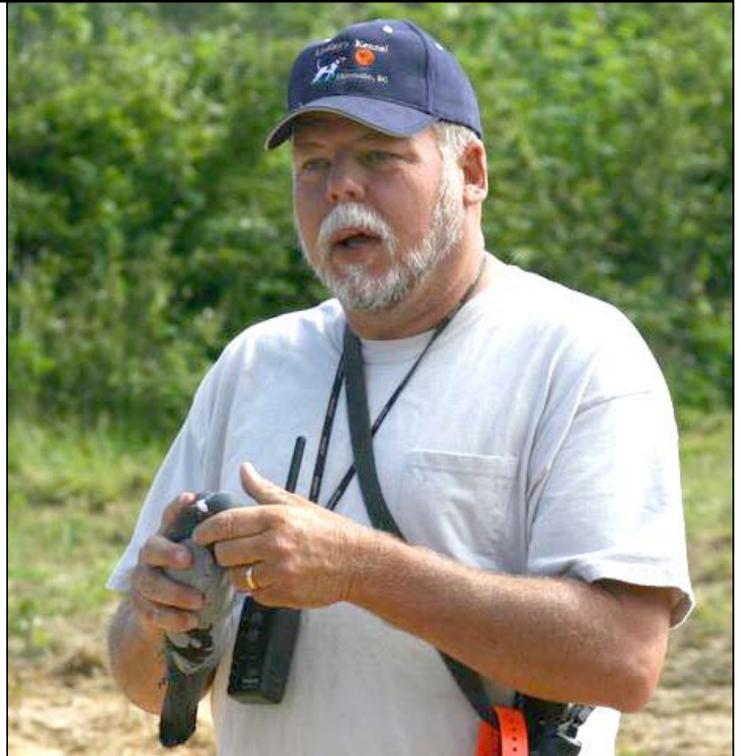
Affectionately called "Mo" by his many friends, he had enjoyed a successful career as a pro trainer but thought of quitting when he became totally deaf from an incurable inner ear disorder. But he loved bird dogs too much to quit, so he learned a new and better way to train, the **non-verbal** method.

He studied the techniques of such noted "quiet" professional trainers as Bill West, who taught it to Bill Gibbons. Through seminars and videos, the West/Gibbons approach has attracted a growing audience of "believers." Maurice learned that this method, necessitated by disability, is actually **superior** to heavy reliance on spoken or shouted commands.

It works because dogs cannot read and cannot talk. It works because it's easier for dogs to learn the **process** first and the command later... quite the opposite of conventional training methods. "*Problem dogs such as gunshys, blinkers, lying down on point, and those that have been abused in previous training can be rehabilitated in most cases when this method is employed,*" Maurice Lindley states with conviction.

Writing in the March/April 2002 *Pointing Dog Journal*, Mark Coleman says of Maurice: "*Rather than force his language on the dogs, he opened his mind to learn more about their language... the language of silence.*"

To repeat, this is a field manual. It is not about introducing your puppy to its new home, not about feeding, health care, or building a kennel, or teaching parlor tricks. It is about training a bird



Maurice Lindley, "Mo" teaching a seminar at Piney Run Kennel
—photo ©Vic Williams

dog to become a competent, reliable, enjoyable companion that finds and holds game birds for the gun, with joy and style.

For information on those other subjects, excellent books have been written. The pamphlets distributed at veterinary offices, pet stores, feed stores, etc. are usually free and offer excellent advice. If you are new to dog ownership, Maurice suggests availing yourself of this information from the sources named, the Internet, or your public library.

So let's assume your pup has been vet checked, wormed, inoculated against disease, has reached about four months of age or more, and is generally ready to be introduced to the field, the Great Outdoors.

Make no mistake; training an ambitious bird dog requires disciplinary measures. This method differs from conventional methods in that discipline is swift and positive but never harsh, cruel or abusive. Whipping, violent shaking, beating, kicking, harsh jerking on a checkcord, and all forms of manhandling common to much training even today are never employed. Dogs of soft temperament,

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those that have been messed up by faulty training, and bold canines—all are candidates for Maurice's non-verbal training.

Maurice Lindley has been a professional trainer of all breeds of pointing dogs for more than thirty years, owning and operating Lindley's Kennels of Piedmont, SC. John Rogers is a freelance writer who collaborated with the late Roy Strickland in the production of a successful book on the training of grouse dogs. His writing has appeared in *Pointing Dog Journal* and a number of other outdoor publications. He lives in Delaware, Ohio, near the city of Columbus, and is a West Michigan native who returns, with his bird dogs, to his beloved home covers each Fall to hunt ruffed grouse and woodcock.

It is a fascinating coincidence that Rogers, 20-plus years after the publication of Mr. Strickland's book, stumbled across the *American Field* coverage of the 1946 Grand National Grouse Championship, which Strickland won with the setter, *Burton's Fleetfoot Ginger*. The reporter, gallery, and judges were awed by the fact that the handler uttered not a word during the flushing attempt, yet the setter exhibited superlative manners on each of its five finds. "Not a word was spoken not a whisker twitched," wrote the scribe. Even then, decades ago, **silent handling** generated admiration. ■

With special appreciation to Jere Murray for contributions to the text.

This little book is dedicated to bird dog lovers—professionals and amateurs alike—who have found, and who are seeking, a kinder, gentler, quieter way of training. It is our firm belief that a training session should be pleasant for trainer and dog alike. If it is a chore for the trainer it will soon become one for his dog also.



Silent training method in action.

—photo ©Vic Williams