

# Retief

**Grand Agility Champion, Rally Obedience Champion, *Retief of the CDT*,  
CGC, CL3-F, RN, RL1, RL2, RA, RE, CTL1-R, CTL1-H, RL1X, RL2X**

*By Louis Fallon*



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On December 29, 2007, former MARS Akita Rescue orphan “Retief of the CDT” earned the highest agility title awarded by the United Kennel Club - the UGRACH – the **Grand Agility Champion**.

Retief is believed to be the first Akita to earn this prestigious title of Grand Agility Champion. When Akita people watched Retief do the agility run it was hard to remember the lanky, stray seven-month-old puppy he was when MARS rescued him from an animal shelter. Retief has also earned the title of Rally Obedience Champion (ARCH) from the American Pet Dog Trainers Association.

Today Retief is a wonderful Akita who does agility and rally when he is not visiting senior citizens at local nursing and retirement homes as a registered therapy dog with Therapy Dogs Inc.

To earn the title UGRACH a dog must qualify in each of the three difficulty levels of agility with very high scores at one trial to earn a leg. This has to be done five times for five qualifying legs. In the last trial there were sixteen dogs running at the most difficult agility level in Retief's height class. He was the only one to qualify and did it with a perfect 200 score! His proud owner is Mrs. Alist South of Mt. Prospect IL.

Retief of the CDT, is named for the hero of a series of amusing short stories and novels by author Keith Laumer. Retief was a heroic interstellar diplomat working for the Corps Diplomatique Terrestrienne (or Earth diplomatic corps in English) which was referred to as the CDT.

The Midwest Akita Rescue Society (MARS) is a non-profit 501-C-3 Akita Rescue group serving the Midwest area. Please visit their website at [www.akitas.org](http://www.akitas.org) - read their Akita articles, shop at their Akita store and make a donation to help celebrate Retief's success as an Akita Rescue **Grand Agility Champion** and **Rally Obedience Champion**. Help MARS help a future Retief of the CDT.

**Retief's proud owner-handler talks about him.** I adopted Retief from MARS on June 23, 2002. He was 7 or 8 months old and became the new kid on the block to my two older Akitas. He started obedience training almost immediately and agility training when he was fully-grown. All my Akitas are titled in agility, but Retief is the first champion. I like seeing breeds other than borders and shelties out there running agility.

Retief is also a CGC - Canine Good Citizen. He is a registered therapy dog with Therapy Dogs, Inc. and visits senior citizens at local nursing and retirement homes. Retief competes in UKC and CPE agility and AKC and APDT rally obedience.

My Akitas have all had names deriving from science fiction. My first was registered as "Obi-Wan Akita." He was my beloved Jedi Knight for 13 years. My girl is "Klaatu Barada Nikto" - a famous saying from the 1950's classic science fiction movie "The Day the Earth Stood Still". Retief is named for the hero of a series of amusing short stories and novels by author Keith Laumer. Retief was a heroic interstellar diplomat working for the Corps Diplomatique Terrestrienne (or Earth diplomatic corps in English), which was referred to as the CDT.

At present I have two Akitas - Retief and Klaatu - Obi having gone to the Rainbow Bridge. On the whole Klaatu and Retief get on well and play together, but they have had disagreements in the past. Retief was a stray for an unknown amount of time and still has some baggage from that part of his life. I feel he was a puppy mill dog who was probably weaned too soon and not properly socialized.

RL1 title - This is the rally obedience title equivalent to the AKC RN (rally novice) for American Pet Dog Trainers (APDT). Retief has five APDT titles now including the championship and is working on champion excellent, and is also working on the RAE in AKC Rally. Rally obedience is a more fun to me than obedience competition, which is a more "formal" obedience. It is a lot more relaxed and the dogs do different things each trial, as opposed to the set pattern of formal obedience.

I've been active in agility for 11-12 years. I got into it because Obi so hated doing formal obedience and kept finding new and more creative ways to NQ. It got to be no fun. A friend suggested I try agility to have fun with him and keep his mind active. Obi loved agility, as did I. After my bad experiences in obedience I was afraid to enter an agility trial, but was finally pushed into it. Obi earned the title UAGI (UKC 1st level agility) when he was almost nine years old. Klaatu started agility training as soon as she was able. She has the innate jumping ability of a brick, so it has been an uphill climb, but she has earned the title UAGII (2nd level). She came very close to earning a championship, but now arthritis keeps her from doing a UKC specific piece of equipment called the crawl tunnel, which must be used at the 2nd level.

We've begun to compete in CPE (Canine Performance Events) agility as CPE makes allowances for older or Physically Challenged handlers or dogs. At her first CPE trial Klaatu, at age 10 1/2, took 4 first places! In CPE the older dogs may elect shorter jump heights - Klaatu was flying around with a big grin on her face. Both dogs have many placement ribbons and perfect 200 scores. Of course, they also have disqualifications and less than stellar scores.

Retief is my first agility champion. I'm very proud of him. He got over half the points he needed for his championship in one glorious weekend. I'd love to see more people doing performance events with their Akitas. Individuals have frequently told me they didn't know Akitas could do Agility.



**Retief on the day he earned the UACH title, the agility judge is Neil Winters, owner-handler Mrs. Aliss South is wearing her MARS vest.**

Dog agility is a canine-human sport in which the dog handler directs a dog through an obstacle course in a race for both time and accuracy. Dogs must run off-leash with no food or toys as incentives. The handler can touch neither dog nor obstacles, except by accident. The dog handler's controls are limited to voice, movement and various body signals, requiring exceptional training of the dog.

In its most basic form, a dog agility course consists of a set of standard obstacles, laid out by an agility judge in a design of his own choosing on a roughly 100 by 100 foot area, with numbers indicating the order in which the dog must complete each of the course obstacles.

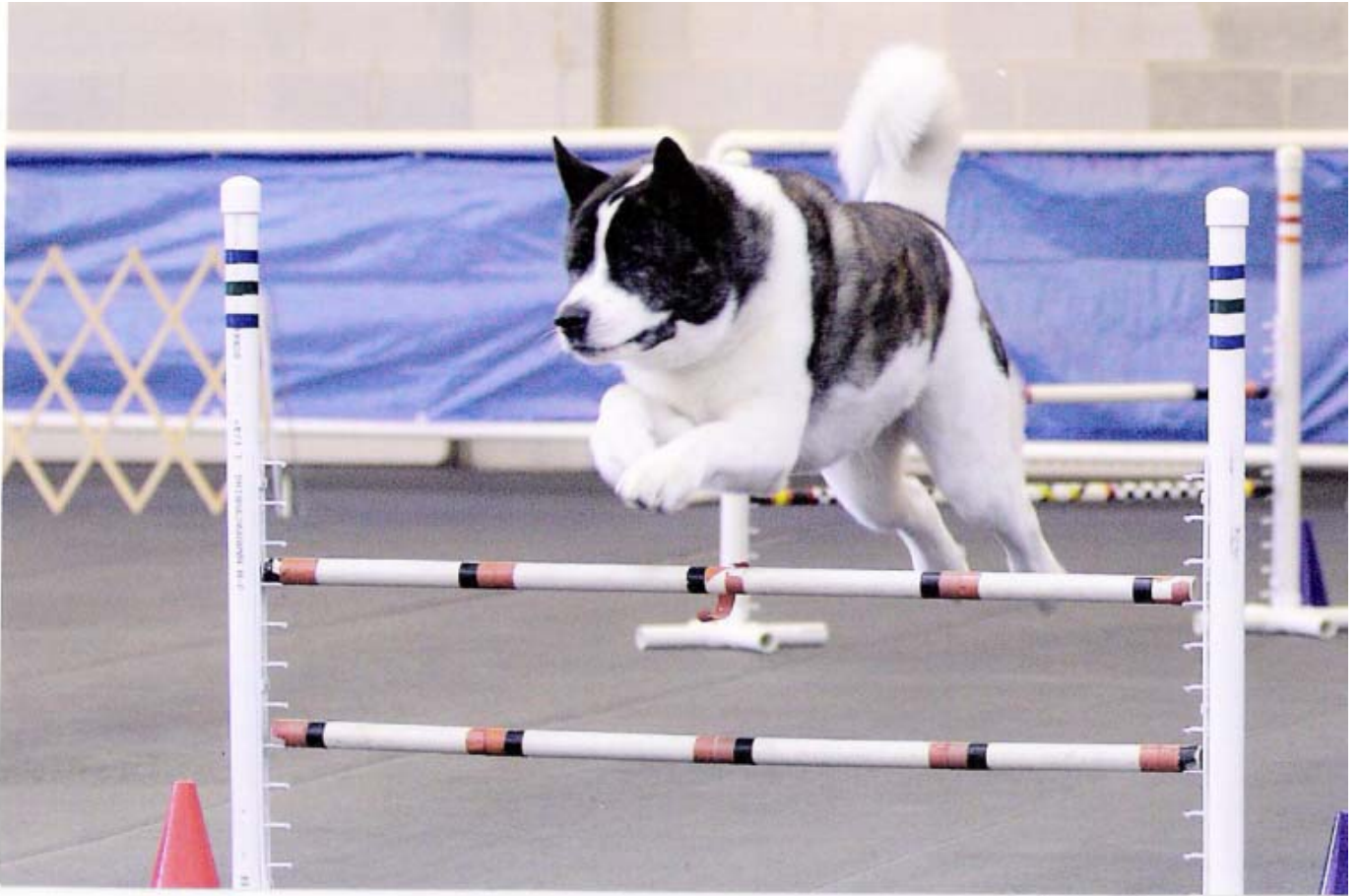
Agility courses are complicated so that a dog could not complete them correctly without human direction. In competition, the dog handler must review and assess the course, decide on dog handling strategies and then direct the dog through the course, with precision and speed equally important. Many strategies exist to compensate for the inherent difference in human and dog speeds and the strengths and weaknesses of the various dogs and dog handlers.

There are several national and international agility organizations including the United Kennel Club, United States Dog Agility Association, North American Dog Agility Council, Canine Performance Events, American Kennel Club, Teacup Dogs Agility Association, Federation Cynologique Internationale and The Kennel Club (UK). Each organization has its own rules about what constitutes an agility fault, and whether a dog can earn a *qualifying score* with faulted runs. A completed run that passes the minimum defined standards for time, faults, points, etc., is referred to as a *qualifying run* and in some cases earns credit towards agility titles. A qualifying run is also referred to as a *leg*. A *clean run* or *clear round* is one with no faults. Different organizations place different values on faults.

In 1984, using information from articles describing English agility, American Charles (Bud) Kramer began developing the idea that became the National Committee for Dog Agility (NCDA). He built and experimented with equipment through the winter of 1984/1985. He published a series of articles describing his ideas for *Front and Finish* magazine, which eventually were published as a book, *Agility Dog Training for All Breeds*, in 1987. In 1987, Kramer founded the NCDA in Manhattan, Kansas. In 1984, using information from articles describing English agility, Charles (Bud) Kramer began developing the idea that became the National Committee for Dog Agility (NCDA). He built and experimented with equipment through the winter of 1984/1985. He published a series of articles describing his ideas for *Front and Finish* magazine, which eventually were published as a book, *Agility Dog Training for All Breeds*, in 1987. In 1987, Kramer founded the NCDA in Manhattan, Kansas with the goal of convincing the AKC to recognize agility as a sport. Kramer's agility was briefly affiliated with AKC agility in the early 1990s, but became separate under a new name, National Club for Dog Agility, in 1991. In August of 1994, NDCA merged with the United Kennel Club, and agility under Kramer's rules has been performed under UKC auspices since then.

The United Kennel Club agility has evolved into a different kind of sport than that provided by AKC, USDAA, and international agility organizations, involving more control of the dog over complicated obstacles rather than speed and accuracy over basic obstacles.

Retief and his owner-handler Mrs. Aliss South have successfully competed in United Kennel Club, American Kennel Club, CPE APDT and other dog club events, earning titles from each dog club, added to his registered therapy dog designation.



**Retief clearing the jump**

Photo by Karen Hollis of Sirius Pet Images.



**Retief doing the weave poles** Photo by Karen Hollis of Sirius Pet Images.



**Retief posing atop the Aframe**

Photo by Karen Hollis of Sirius Pet Images.



**Retief and Klaatu two Agility Akitas.**



**“Klaatu” - UAGII Klaatu Barada Nikto,  
CGC, TT, TDI, VA, TDIA, RL1, CSL1-R, CSL1-H, CSL1-F**  
UAGII titleholder with rosette signifying her UKC highest agility title,  
Klaatu has earned the title TDIA - Therapy Dog International Active Volunteer –  
for making 50 therapy visits. At present she has made over 100 therapy dog visits.





**Maile and Klaatu. Maile and Klaatu do therapy work together. Maile is a rescue Maltese.**



**Retief with agility judge Neil Winters  
and proud owner Mrs. Aliss South of Illinois.**