

# WHAT TYPE ARE WE?

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The German Shepherd Dog was created by Captain Max von Stephanitz in 1899. The book *The German Shepherd Dog in Words and Pictures* contains about 300 pages dedicated to how he went about this - not a very exciting read, but it wasn't something that was done without a great deal of thought and planning.

German Shepherd Dogs are now bred throughout the world but they have been split into many different types. Many articles have been written about the history of the breed and these splits in much more detail, this is just a simple explanation of some of the different types, their origins and their descriptions.

## DDR (East German Working Line)

The first split occurred after the Second World War and the division between the republics of East and West Germany. During the cold war, the Government of East Germany controlled the DDR (Deutsches Demokratische Republik) German Shepherd Dog pedigree registration and breeding program because they were sought after by the military. Because their breeding program was cut off from outside influences for almost 40 years, and their breeding criteria extremely rigid, the DDR GSD ultimately exhibited a distinctive look.

The DDR no longer exists today, but the bloodlines still do. Strong, solid, lean, heavy bone, large massive heads, darker pigmentation, strong temperament, lower prey drive and good working ability describes the East German GSD.



## Czech Working Line

The second split came about by the same set of circumstances. German Shepherds bred in Czechoslovakia were primarily working dogs used for the protection of their borders. What is unique is that this breeding revolved around one kennel, owned by the Czechoslovakian Army's Pohranicni Straze (Border Patrol). The dogs used for breeding were acquired mostly from the East Germany (DDR) and the breeding program focused on solid nerves, working ability, strong bones and dark pigmentation. Czech dogs have a little less bone than their DDR relatives with a better balance of prey and defence drives and are still available today.



## West German Showlines

It was really the dogs of West Germany which began the most obvious divergence from the original characteristics and concepts around the early 1970's. The German Shepherd was transformed by a group of people focused on the form, structure and external appearance of the dog with a gradual loss of attention on the working origins of the breed. This resulted in the 3rd split - the West German Showline type.

German Showline dogs are known for their black and red pigment, large bone, plush coat, and roach back structure. The Showline is the most recognized look of the GSD breed with the preponderance of this type being red and black saddle backs.



## American Showlines

The 4th split comes from the same type of circumstance - although this time the the show ring in the United States. During the second world war the GSD in America, cut off from its German roots and through very close line breeding, started to develop its own appearance. After the war American judges and breeders had developed a taste for their own, uniquely American style German Shepherd, featuring a more "refined look", and a lot more hind leg angulation to get a floating side gait. The American type of GSD comes in all colours (including Panda!) and has no regard for working ability.



## West German Working Lines (our kennel)

The 5th type of German Shepherd Dog is known as the West German Working Line dog. This type is the closest to the original dogs created by von Stephanitz. Their structure is solid, good bone, higher in prey drive and colours include sables, blacks, bi-colours and black and tan.



*Our kennel is West German Working Lines. We try to stay true to the original vision of the GSD. We breed for ourselves but we are not trying to create a new breed, we are happy with the German Shepherd Dog that way it was intended.*