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Ashtabula Police Department canine officer Adrian dies

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Star Beacon



ASHTABULA — Adrian, the K-9 officer that had been with the Ashtabula Police Department for a little more than 10 years, died Monday, July 26, 2010.

He was 11 years old.

“Everyone in the department is saddened by the loss,” Ashtabula Police Chief Robert Stell said. “Adrian was an excellent K-9 officer. He will be missed and remembered.”

Stell said Adrian’s partner, Sgt. John Koski, noticed earlier this week that the normally energetic Adrian appeared to be “overheating” and not himself.

Adrian was immediately examined by a local veterinarian, who diagnosed the police dog with a ruptured tumor on his spleen.

His watch officially ended Monday.

Like most heroes, K-9 officer Adrian’s bravery went mostly unreported in the news. During his career, he boasted 37 apprehensions, many involving weapons and drugs.

“Three of those apprehensions were felons with loaded firearms and lengthy criminal records who admitted they would have shot me if not for the dog,” Koski said. “One felon had four prior armed-robbery convictions and waited around a corner for me with a loaded .40-caliber handgun.”

Adrian also apprehended a felon involved in a fight, who started to reach for his loaded .38-caliber pistol until he saw the police dog, Koski said.

“He had an excellent temperament, good drive and was the best-looking German shepherd I had ever seen,” Koski said. “It’s ironic that I lost my partner on the very day that I could retire. ... It is because of him that I am able (to retire), and me and my family owe him my life.”

Stell said the department also lost a very valuable drug dog.

Adrian went on numerous narcotics searches in homes and vehicles for the city police department, as well as for the Ohio State Highway Patrol. During his decade-long career, he sniffed out marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, illegal methamphetamines and heroin. More than \$200,000 worth of money and vehicles have been forfeited thanks to Adrian’s keen nose, police said.

One of the vehicles, a sport utility vehicle, was used for years by the department, Koski said.

Many children know Adrian and Koski from their informational visits to area schools and libraries, where they would demonstrate what a K-9 officer can do.

“Nothing gave me — and I am sure him — more satisfaction than seeing children’s eyes as they watched in amazement as Adrian showed them what a police dog did and the confidence he showed,” Koski said. “His gentle nature with children, yet the ferocity in which he attacked the bite sleeve, did not go unnoticed by policeman and citizens alike.”

Longtime city police officer Capt. Gerald Cornelius said Adrian was the best police dog he has ever seen.

Koski’s peers and supervisors named Koski Officer of the Year in 2007 and 2008. Koski believes it was largely because of the arrests made possible by Adrian.

“The statistic that I cannot quote, but is very important, is the situations that Adrian prevented by his presence,” Koski said. “I will never know how many people would have assaulted me, or my fellow officers, but chose not to because of Adrian.”

Suspects kicked, punched and beat on Adrian to escape apprehension, yet he continued to do his job and protect his partner.

“I will never forget the pride that I felt when my partner walked alongside me,” Koski said. “I took comfort with the knowledge that he would go into any situation, in any weather, anytime, just to be with me and be a police dog.”