

# K9 COP

APRIL/MAY 2010  
MAGAZINE™

FOR POLICE AND MILITARY WORKING DOG HANDLERS • \$5.95



FEATURED DEPARTMENT:

## Boston Police Department

**+ plus**

*Featured Agency:  
Royal Canadian  
Mounted Police*

*The Importance  
of Tactical  
Obedience*

*Improving  
Your Tracking  
Success*

*Police Officer and Head Trainer,  
Troy Caisey, with his Patrol &  
EOD/Narcotics Detection  
shepherd, Bronson, in  
front of a BPD Special  
Operations  
cruiser.*



FEATURED **K-9** DEPARTMENT



# ***Proactive Deterrence***

*How Constant Training Helps the Boston Police Department  
K-9 Unit Fight Everyday Crime*

Article & Photos By Oren Hartov

*On a cold December evening, a sedan carrying four young men cruises slowly down a quiet residential street in central Boston. One of the group spots his mark, a crowd of similarly dressed young Bostonians standing on a corner and talking. Quick as lightning, three of the car's passengers remove handguns and brandish them through the windows—they fire multiple shots at the crowd, striking a private home in the process. Just as quickly as they drew their weapons, they withdraw them into the vehicle and speed away into the night...*

## *Proactive Deterrence*

Soon afterward, the Boston Police Department receives word of the shooting, including a description of the suspects' vehicle. They relay this information to the officers on patrol, and one of them, driving an unmarked cruiser, spots a car fitting the description.

But the suspects also spot the cruiser and try desperately to evade it and the fate that awaits them. The police officer is too quick for them, however, and forces the vehicle to pull over. After the suspects are cuffed and he has searched the car, the officer is able to recover two spent shell casings, but no weapons. He knows they must be in the vehicle somewhere, but a thorough search reveals nothing—clearly this is a case for “Jerry.”

A second squad car soon responds to the call, out of which climbs a stocky officer named Watson who has the look of a man one would not want to anger, and his partner, Jerry, who was simply born to solve crimes like these.

Of course Jerry is not a human, but a furry German Shepherd with plenty of police experience to back up his bite.

Officer Watson walks Jerry to the suspects' vehicle, where the officer on the scene explains the situation. After the shell casings are removed



*Police Officer Kevin Watson and his Patrol/Narcotics Detection shepherd, Jerry, easily found the three handguns hidden behind the center console of this vehicle.*

from the car, Watson leads Jerry through the vehicle in an attempt to locate the firearms; within seconds, the shepherd alerts on the center console area. Watson rewards him with a KONG® and finishes searching the rest of the car.

After the team has concluded its search, the officers pry off the vents on the center dashboard console, and there, freshly fired, are the three handguns used earlier in the shooting. Officer Watson smiles as he pats his partner Jerry on the head; four convictions later, the BPD K-9 Unit adds yet another

victory to its list of successes on the street—a list already thousands strong, and growing.

“Beantown,” as the natives affectionately refer to it, is an extremely busy place; with more than 250,000 students attending over 100 colleges and universities in the greater Boston area. The city has been called “*the Athens of America*,” and not without good reason.

A city this busy and this large calls for a proportionately large police force, and within that force, special teams are needed to combat the myriad types of everyday crime.

## *Proactive Deterrence*

Under the Special Operations Division umbrella, the BPD K-9 Unit is one such special team.

Consisting of 20 dogs and their respective handlers, including nine Patrol/Narcotics teams, one Patrol/Ballistic Detection team, and 10 EOD/Ballistic Detection teams, the K-9 Unit is a relatively large and extremely busy group (to give one an idea of just how busy they are, the unit responded to 3,941 total calls for service in 2009 alone).

Overseen by Deputy Superintendent Thomas F. Lee, Commander of the Special Operations Division, and under the direction of Sgt. Frank W. Flynn, K-9 Unit Supervisor, the BPD K-9 Unit contributes an enormous effort toward the Boston Police Department's collective crime fighting goals.

One of the K-9 Unit's most valuable resources is its nationally certified training center, which began operating in the mid-seventies. Located at the Special Operations Division headquarters, the center is a regional police dog training academy, servicing over 38 outside agencies from the Massachusetts and greater New England area in addition to its own officers. Under the direction of Police Officer Troy Caisey,

*Officer Watson and his K-9, Jerry, found three handguns hidden behind a vehicle's center console.*



## *Proactive Deterrence*

Head Trainer, the Center provided training to over 180 officers and K-9s in 2009.

The training offered at the Center is high-level, disciplined and popular (some units even travel from New York to attend courses). All patrol K-9s and their handlers complete 14-week patrol dog training, narcotics teams complete five-week narcotic detection training and EOD teams complete 10-week Explosive Detection Training. Since almost all of the patrol K-9s are

cross-trained in narcotics, these K-9 teams must complete roughly five months of continuous training before they can become fully certified and begin working. Additionally, all K-9 teams must complete at least 16 hours of training each month, but are encouraged to be working with their dogs every day when they are not on Patrol, or when they are in between calls.

Officer Caisey urges his K-9 teams to train for and receive as many certifications as possible, as

he knows that in addition to keeping the dogs and the men sharp, they come in handy when the officers must testify in court. Certifications received by Boston K-9 teams include those from the BPD, the International Police Work Dog Association (IPWDA), the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA), the ATF National Odor Recognition Test (NORT) and more. Boston EOD K-9 teams also participate in joint training with the BPD Bomb Squad for IED scenarios.

*Officers and their dogs from the BPD K-9 Unit.*



## *Proactive Deterrence*

The Training Center at Special Ops HQ includes an indoor building with a large central room for bite work and odor detection, as well as several other rooms and spaces that can be used for odor detection in both narcotics and ballistics. Outside are several expansive, open fields used for tracking and bite work and a complete agility course that does an excellent job of keeping the dogs (and their handlers) in shape.

The German Shepherds, Dutch Shepherds and Labradors that make

*Deputy Superintendent Thomas Lee, Spec. Ops. Division Commander and Sgt. Frank Flynn, K-9 Unit Supervisor.*



## *Proactive Deterrence*

*Officer Caisey and his K-9, Bronson, join baseball legend Ted Williams in front of Boston's famed Fenway Park.*



up the K-9 Unit all come from excellent stock. The unit relies on three different “brokers” who travel to Europe and pick out the best K-9s they can find; the dogs are then kept at the brokers’ kennels until they are between 12 and 16 months of age, after which the officers reevaluate and select the ones they think will make the best candidates for police work. As the department prefers to retire dogs around nine years old, new dogs are brought in roughly every two to three years.

Though they all live with their handlers, the Patrol K-9s are not allowed to become “house pets” and typically sleep in custom-built kennels or, in inclement weather, in crates indoors.

“When the dog is with the handler, there is a working relationship; the handler is either training with him, walking him, grooming him or working,” says Officer Caisey. “In my opinion this causes the dog to be more willing to work for the handler, be more responsive to commands, whereas if you have your dog in the house, you tend to be a little bit more lax.”

“Some of the handlers learn the hard way,” he chuckles, pointing to an unfortunate K-9 officer whose dog had become unresponsive to certain commands. The officer



## *Proactive Deterrence*



*EOD/Ballistic Detection K-9 Lieno discovers a revolver hidden beneath the cover of a turntable.*

smiles—“Oh, I learned the hard way, all right.”

The BPD K-9s and their handlers are for the most part assigned directed patrols by the command staff, and although many of these take place in specific “problem areas,” the teams still must respond to calls throughout the entire city. There are four six-hour shifts a day, with two to four handlers and their dogs on duty per shift, depending on what is needed at any given time. Usually there is at

least one patrol team and one EOD team on call simultaneously.

Calls and patrols can include anything from building searches, outdoor tracking, narcotics searches, firearm location and motor vehicle citations to security sweeps and perimeter detail on such significant events as the World Series at Boston’s famed Fenway Park, the NBA Finals and visits from American or foreign dignitaries. When President Obama came to Boston recently to speak at several

local universities, the BPD K-9 team worked in close cooperation with the Secret Service to provide the necessary security. During visits from foreign dignitaries, the K-9 Unit will work with the State Department, F.B.I, and other federal agencies to ensure the safety of the men and women visiting the United States.

Demonstrations and community service are also part of the K-9 Team’s mission, and the unit will regularly perform demos at schools, dog shows, summer block

## Proactive Deterrence

parties and other local functions. On Fridays during the summer, kids from the Junior Police Academy come to HQ to watch and interact with the K-9s and their handlers, learning about the various types of jobs they perform.

“Our K-9 teams are not only an invaluable resource for the patrol force,” comments Deputy Superintendent Lee, “but also help us to form strong bonds with the community through K-9 demonstrations, school visits and park visits.”

In November and December of 2009, the unit conducted over 40 sweeps of storage containment facilities all across the city, checking

for any weapons and explosives at the 30-plus facilities they contacted, offering their services. Sgt. Flynn was proud to say, “The owners and proprietors of these establishments praised the proactive public safety plan sponsored by the department.”

Officer Caisey, who oversees all training and has spent 18 of his 23 years on the force working with K-9s (13 of which he has been a trainer), is particularly proud of the accomplishments his unit has had in the area of ballistic detection. The unit began training heavily in ballistic evidence and firearm recovery roughly five years ago with only two EOD K-9s, but the program has quickly grown.

“The firearms recovery has really taken off,” Officer Caisey said. “We’ve received an additional eight dogs because the program has been so successful.”

Officer Watson also praises a piece of technology called the ShotSpotter® system in helping the police department get a lead on shootings. ShotSpotter is an acoustic gunshot sensing system deployed throughout the city that recognizes gunfire, triangulates its source and relays this information to the BPD, who will usually send in an EOD K-9 team in addition to any other police officers to investigate.

“We’ve recovered spent shell casings and bullet fragments using the system,” comments Officer Caisey. “We even ended up finding a shooting victim while investigating a ShotSpotter call,” adds Officer Watson.

Still, though the ShotSpotter can identify gunfire and give officers a general area in which to search, it’s ultimately up to the K-9 teams to recover the evidence that will help put criminals behind bars. As many of the BPD K-9s are Homeland Security-funded, it is worth noting that by giving these dogs extra training in ballistic detection, Officer Caisey is taking particular advantage of this DHS resource by

*Tacoma, one of the K-9 Unit's EOD/Ballistic Detection K-9s, takes a break after an Odor Recognition training exercise.*



# Proactive Deterrence

helping to combat everyday crime. “This is a pretty steady unit,” says Caisey. “Every side of the K-9 Unit is doing its job, but I think the most successful side has been the firearms detection. We’ve taken a lot of guns off the street.”

Deputy Superintendent Lee clearly concurs with Caisey’s viewpoint that pro-active deterrence is essential to success for a large, municipal K-9 unit.

“I’m extremely proud of the professional, dedicated service that our K-9 Unit provides to the community,” he says while observing training at Special Operations HQ. “Our patrol, narcotics detection and EOD/firearm detection teams have made Boston a safer city by locating and taking off the street guns, drugs and criminals that otherwise would not have been found.”

Officer Caisey is also quick to remind that being part of the K-9 Unit is about more than simply loving dogs. “You have to want to be a police officer. It’s a commitment, it’s a change of lifestyle...if you’re doing it the right way, it’s a commitment and it’s work.”

“Most police officers see you out on the street with your dog doing a search and they think, ‘Oh, well that looks good,’” he continues, “but

## Handlers and K-9s Train Hard to Perform at Peak



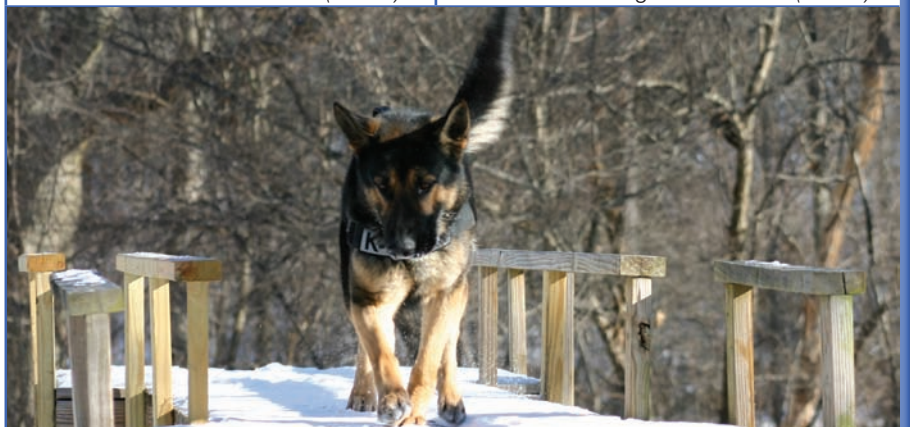
Police Officer & Head Trainer, Troy Caisey, prepares to meet his shepherd, Bronson, as the latter finishes an obstacle on the agility course. (above)



Here, Bronson emerges from beneath a wooden “crawl” structure. (above)



Bronson waits faithfully for his master’s command to navigate this tube. (above)



Bronson makes his way across an elevated structure on the agility course.



# Proactive Deterrence

they have no idea what it took to get to that point.”

Indeed, without his intensive training, Jerry the German Shepherd could have been any other typical house pet—but Officer Watson would like to think that this dog enjoys his job as a police K-9, patrolling the streets and making a difference in people’s lives...

He knows he sure enjoys it himself. ■

**Oren Hartov** is a contributing editor to *Special Operations Report*. He has authored numerous articles on military and law enforcement tactical units and technological innovations, including features on U.S. military working dogs, Special Forces combat divers, U.S. Army Rangers and the British Special Air Service. Hartov can be contacted at [OrenHartov@aol.com](mailto:OrenHartov@aol.com)

*Police officer, Joseph Fisher, watches as his Patrol/ Narcotics Detection K-9, Tiburon, on the agility course. (Photo on the left.)*

| YEAR END DATA (2009)                         |  | K-9 UNIT: PATROL SECTION                  |             |
|--|--|---|-------------|
| Radio Calls                                  |  |   | 3287        |
| Building Searches                            |  |   | 310         |
| Outside Tracking                             |  |   | 274         |
| On-sites                                     |  |   | 1916        |
| Narcotics Searches                           |  |   | 577         |
| Assists                                      |  | Included above                            |             |
| Arrests/K-9 Assisted                         |  |   | 456         |
| Unit Arrests                                 |  |   | 44          |
| Firearms Located                             |  |   | 48          |
| Motor Vehicle Citations                      |  |   | 897         |
| Parking Violations                           |  |   | 259         |
| Community Service K-9 Demos & Civic Benefits |  |   | 80          |
| EOD/BALLISTIC DETECTION                      |  | K-9 UNIT: EOD/BALLISTIC DETECTION SECTION |             |
| Radio Calls                                  |  |   | 654         |
| Assignments*                                 |  |   | 390         |
| Directed Patrol**                            |  |   | 4468        |
| Assists                                      |  | Included above                            |             |
| <b>Total Calls For Service</b>               |  |   | <b>3941</b> |

\* Includes dignitary protection, building and vehicle sweeps.  
 \*\* Includes court houses, transit facilities, federal buildings, state buildings, national monuments, VIP dwellings and political functions, neighborhoods, high crime areas, Code 19s, and parks.

*Tiburon gets a good grip on decoy, Frances Holder.*

