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(S.D.)-State Highway Patrol To Retire Bomb Dog Jet



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 03/25/2013 10:46 AM

Photo: Jet, a South Dakota Highway Patrol police service dog, sniffs out a drawer while at work with his handler, Lt. Scott Sheldon.

(PIERRE, S.D.)- After a decade of sniffing out explosives with a nose-to-the-ground work ethic, Jet is retiring from the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Jet, an 11-year-old Belgian sheepdog, began his career with the Highway Patrol in 2003 as a police service dog trained to detect the odors of many different compounds that could be used to construct explosive devices. Jet officially retired on March 6th. Governor Dennis Daugaard issued a proclamation marking the occasion, saying, "It is important to honor veteran police service dogs who are faithful, loyal and devoted to their responsibilities and provide a valuable service to their South Dakota communities."

Lt. Scott Sheldon has been the dog's handler for the past decade. "The K-9 explosives detection unit is different from the K-9 narcotics unit," Sheldon said. "We're not like the dope dogs. We don't want to find anything." Based in Pierre and deployed throughout the state, Jet completed protective sweeps of the State Capitol during legislative sessions, Supreme Court hearings and other official functions, says Col. Craig Price, Highway Patrol superintendent. "He is also able to detect recently fired weapons at venues such as the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally," Price said. "He has been a great partner to Lieutenant Sheldon and has helped with many seizures and the capture of criminals."

Sheldon and Jet also responded to bomb threats and provided dignitary protection functions, including assignments for the U.S. Secret Service, police and sheriffs' departments, schools, and universities.

"Jet is a very social dog, but knows when it is time to work," Sheldon said. "When he is off-duty, I give him his food and his kennel. He doesn't need to worry about obedience training after work. Just like any other enforcement agent with the patrol, Jet becomes more focused when he is on duty."

Jet will be released from service into the care of Sheldon and his family. "I'll have to keep him in his kennel for a while when I am putting on my uniform," Sheldon said. "He knows when it is time to go to work, and now that he won't get to go with me, he'll be a little cranky."

Col. Price said explosive-detection duties will be assumed by trooper Michael Dale and police service dog Raica.

--South Dakota Highway Patrol