

Sheriff's Dept. Poised to 'Take a Bite Out of Crime' on Rail Lines

(Jan. 24, 2002) Jake, a Sheriff's Department narco dog, wasn't quite sure what to think of the Metro Blue Line trains he boarded. Not only did he have to stay on leash as he sniffed his way along the aisles, but the darned thing moved!

Still, by the end of a four-hour familiarization exercise, Wednesday, Jake seemed to gain more confidence. The Belgian

Malinois and his handler, Deputy Joy Burch, were part of a team of deputies who boarded trains to look for narcotics, but mostly to get riders' reactions to the presence of the dog.



Jake, a narco dog, leads Sheriff's Deputy Joy Burch down the aisle of a Metro Blue Line train during a recent familiarization exercise.

"Everyone I talked to seemed very positive," said Transit Services Bureau Deputy Ban Nguyen, who coordinated the exercise. "Most mentioned 9-11 and terrorists, and they felt safer when they saw Jake."

That's the reaction the Sheriff's Department wants, according to Capt. Dan Finklestein, commanding officer of the Transit Services Bureau. "We hope to use the dogs frequently on the rail lines and on buses." The Bureau is under MTA contract to patrol the Metro Blue and Green lines and bus lines in unincorporated areas.

Two more dogs are scheduled for rail familiarization exercises, Jan. 28. Nguyen noted that the team found no drugs during Wednesday's exercise. The Sheriff's Department employs six narcotics dogs, two bomb-sniffing dogs and a dog used in arson investigations.

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