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Deputy Jim Amann with German Shepherd Dana, at left, and Deputy Rich Faulk with Belgian Malinois Deborah, at right, patrol transit areas in search of suspicious items. Photos by Sarah Winfrey.



**Canine ‘Deputies’ Dana and Deborah are on the Job at Metro**

By SARAH WINFREY

(April 7, 2006) For the Transit Service Bureau’s Canine Services Detail, the day begins early. At 5 a.m., they start patrolling Metro buildings and rail stations.

Deputies Jim Amann and Rich Faulk are just getting into the routine of patrolling with their new partners: Dana, a German Shepherd who has a confident swagger, and Deborah, a Belgian Malinois who can’t wait to get out into the field.

The deputies and their bomb-sniffing dogs recently completed the 10-week training program at the Transportation Security Administration’s Explosives Detection Canine Handler Course at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

Amann and Faulk were paired with Dana and Deborah during the first week of training. “I’m a dog lover,” says Amann. “I thought it would be great to come to work every day and work with dogs.”

Trained with their handlers, Dana and Deborah, learn the tasks of searching crowded areas, such as Metro, for explosives.



The LASD Canine Services Detail handlers are still getting the dogs accustomed to their new surroundings.

**Learning the territory**

The Canine Services Detail teams have been at Metro for only three weeks and the handlers are still getting the dogs accustomed to their new surroundings.

“We are trying to get the dogs exposed to all different environments – trains, luggage and Union Station where everyone comes in,” Faulk says. “Any particular place that we think they’ll be.”

The handlers turn the work of detecting scents into a game for the dogs. For every correct discovery, the dogs get to play with their favorite chew toy. When the dogs find something suspect they react with a “passive response,” such as sitting down.

Faulk stresses the importance of making sure the dogs get used to the different environments. The teams patrol escalators, trains, buses and other areas they might have to search for suspicious items.

When the deputies have to do office work, Dana and Deborah take a break by curling up under handler’s desks. Quietly, yet impatiently, waiting to go out into the field again.

**Sensory abilities**

Choice breeds for bomb detection and security patrols are German Shepherds, Belgian Malanois, and Labrador Retrievers because of their even temperament and sensory abilities.

Dana and Deborah were purchased from a European breeder. Both listen and respond to English commands, but Deborah can understand “let go” and “stay” in Dutch.

Dana and Deborah are not the only working canines at Metro. Other teams of dogs and handlers are used in search and rescue and firearms detection. Two Metro Security also has two canine teams trained in explosive detection.

The typical dog performs 10 to 12 years of service and if their handlers wish to adopt the dogs after retiring, they can submit a request form for them.

"You want to work with them as much as you can," Faulk says, "you build a rapport with them."

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