



Wausau Police Department

The Informer

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Noble Cause

Winston Churchill said "What is the use of living, if it be not to strive for noble causes and to make this muddled world a better place for those who will live in it after we are gone?" Police officers get into law enforcement because they want to make the world a better place through serving others. As traumatic incidents unfold all around them and regularly throughout their law enforcement career, their personal and professional lives are impacted greatly. They strive for noble cause in their lives and do make the world a better place.

Just last month I wrote about the challenges that face today's police officers. I wrote "Officers must be tactically sound and have extraordinary courage to engage armed threats." On January 16, that statement was personified on 12th Avenue near Arctic Lane in Wausau. Our police officers faced an armed gunman who fired multiple gunshots at them. They were tactically sound. They faced the situation with extraordinary courage. They protected our community and kept people safe; even while putting themselves in the way of peril.

Now the investigation by DCI is into week two and will hopefully be wrapping up in the next few weeks. The District Attorney will then review the investigation and make a determination as to whether or not the officers were justified in their use of force. Then it's back to "normal" I suppose. This is the place where I struggle. The officers on scene during this shooting will never forget what transpired that day and it may impact their lives significantly in the future. How, then, do we actually return

to normalcy so quickly after that life and death event?

Our profession is predicated on a culture of toughness, stoicism, and a nothing-bothers-me mindset. I believe every officer here is tough, both mentally and physically. You put yourselves in harm's way regularly to protect our community. Each of you have gone through unbearably difficult calls in your career that have impacted you tremendously. You're tough and you stand ready to do it again. THAT is striving for a noble cause!



But we also have to make sure we are caring for ourselves. Be tough when it comes to your wellness. Let's change the culture of a nothing-bothers-me mindset. Because we've all experienced sleeplessness, anger, anxiety, or depression as a result of the things we've seen. Make time to see a counselor or a Chaplain or someone from peer support. Ask your family and friends to identify when you seem off. Inform them when you've experienced something difficult at work so they can be watchful for symptoms that you might be struggling. Check on your co-workers with a text or a call. Few things are more powerful to a police officer than when another officer expresses concern about how

they're coping with a difficult call.

That THIN BLUE LINE we talk about so much is the line you step across each day when you go to work. People on the other side of that line don't know the things you've seen. They don't know the things you've experienced. It's hard for them to truly understand. They cannot comprehend your experience. But that doesn't mean they don't care or don't want to help you.

You are noble because you choose to step across that THIN BLUE LINE. You make the muddled world better for those who will be here after you're gone from this profession. I pray for your safety and your health throughout your career. Be safe.

-Chief Benjamin Bliven

Just a quick reminder about resources that are available for you:

- Stop and see any supervisor, we'll help get you to the right place
- EAP – 800-540-3758 (24 hour hotline) / <https://ascensionwieap.org>
- Peer Support – Contact Captain Ben Graham or Lt Jill Kurtzhals
- Wausau Police Chaplain - <O:\WAUSAU POLICE DEPT\Daysheets\Home Phone Numbers\Home Phone 2019>
- Crisis Text Line – Text BLUE to 741741
- Copline – 1-800-267-5463
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

“I Believe” by Daniel T. DuRan (Police Officer)

I believe in my badge

I believe in the weight of the gun I carry

I believe in the 5am smell, after a rain storm and the city is truly ours as night gives way to day

I believe in the kiss I give my family before I walk out the door

I believe in the kisses I'm given when I return home

I believe in the talks with my crew about nothing that mean everything

I believe in the fear that over takes me every time I get out of my car or walk into a house that is not my own

I believe in the fear of the unknown

I believe in the power to overcome my fear and go forward

I believe in good

I believe in evil

I believe in my community

I believe I am a cop

Awards & Promotions

New Officers!

Friday, January 24, we swore in three new officers to our Wausau Police Department family. From left to right: Officer Hnia Thao, 3203, Officer Andrew Kutchenriter, 3202, and Officer Seth Cate, 3201. Officer Cate has already started his field training, and Officers Thao and Kutchenriter start at the police academy immediately.



Acknowledgement & Other News



We are excited to announce a large litter of plush puppies have arrived at the police department! We have plush versions of all of our K9 - both patrol dogs and therapy dogs. Stop in at the Wausau Police Department during business hours to purchase your own for \$15 each. Stuffed Badge & Theo can also be purchased at Wausau East & West from the school resource officers. Collect them all! Proceeds benefit the Wausau PD K9 Unit.

Awards & Promotions

Officer Jaeger & K-9 Layla Retire

Officer Mark Jaeger retired this month, after 28 years of service to the Wausau Police Department. He leaves behind a legacy of service and mentoring following his final shift. He started at the PD in 1992 and became one of the department's first K9 handlers a handful of years later. The knowledge and experience he gained from working with four different K9 partners benefitted not only our

community and agency, but allowed Officer Jaeger to be a great resource for other K9 handlers in the surrounding area. His impact will be felt for many years to come.



Officer Jaeger is pictured with retired K9 Rex on the left and retiring K9 Layla, on the right.

Farewell!



This month we also said goodbye to two of our patrol supervisors. Lt Bill Taylor (left) and Lt Nathan Pekarske (right.)

These lieutenants have served our community well, and will now be pursuing other opportunities and new adventures outside of law enforcement. Their leadership will be missed, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors!



Acknowledgements & Other News

Adult School Crossing Guard Recognition Week



January 14th-18th is Wisconsin Adult Crossing Guard Recognition Week. The Wausau Police Department is very grateful for our crossing guards and their dedication to our students. Everyday they brave the weather and make sure our children are safe. We would like to thank them for their service and hope you will do the same!



Save the date!

Mark your calendar for the next Paws & Protect - a great, inexpensive opportunity to have your cat or dog vaccinated for rabies, and microchipped! You can also take care of your pet license at the same time!

February 8, 2020, 8 am-12 pm
 March 7, 2020, 8 am-12 pm

This event will take place at the Wausau Department of Public Works, 105 E Chellis St.



PAWS & PROTECT

- ◆ **Free**– Rabies vaccines
- ◆ **\$10**– Microchips implanted
- ◆ 2020 Licensing for cats & dogs must be paid for

Animals MUST be on a leash or in a crate



Acknowledgements & Other News

Little Pink Riding Hood

In June of 2019, officers were dispatched for a call regarding a small child walking outside in the wee hours of the mornings. The child was wearing a pink jacket and boots. She was carrying a purple tote which had a few stuffed animals and dolls, and a change of clothes.

Officer Slempek responded, and the 4-year-old approached him and told him that she was upset about not being able to go to her grandma's house earlier. The girl was now on her way to go to grandma's.

Her parents discovered her missing a short time later when the open door was noticed. She was then returned to her family.

In January, the family dropped off a large painting depicting the incident. The child is portrayed as Red (Pink) Riding Hood off to see her Grandma, and she was protected from the Big Bad Wolf by Officer Slempek, who is carrying her purple tote for her.

What an awesome gesture from this family! We are glad this tale had a happy ending!



Acknowledgements & Other News

Active Shooter Preparedness Training

On February 17th, from 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm, the Wausau Police Department will be providing an Active Shooter Preparedness presentation. The presentation is geared towards Wausau area business owners, management, supervisors/team leaders, and business security personnel who will be responsible for facilitating training for their employees. We will focus on fundamental concepts attendees can take back to their organization to develop an Active Shooter Emergency Action Plan and training program for their employees. These concepts have been adopted from resources created by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security. If you are unable to attend this event, you will have other opportunities, as we will be holding them periodically throughout the year. We will post updates on our Facebook page.

The training will be held in the Wausau Police Department community room at 515 Grand Ave, Wausau. Enter through the main entrance off of Seymour Street.

Reserve your seat by sending an email to john.phillips@ci.wausau.wi.us. Please type "Active Shooter Presentation Reservation" in the email subject line. Also provide the company/business you are employed with and your job title in the narrative.



Department Appreciation

Treats!



Natalie and Diane brought us some super delicious treats courtesy of Home Depot this month. Coffee is always great to keep us going! Thanks ladies!

A big thank you to Dana of Dana's Sweets N' More, who dropped off a whole meal for our night shift. There was some awesome soups, buns and cookies, as well as some Tim Horton's coffee (for those that are unfamiliar - Tim Horton's is a Canadian coffee shop, similar to a Dunkin' Donuts.)



Department Spotlight

K-9's

The K9s at the Wausau Police Department are one of the public's favorite parts of our department. And who can blame them? This month, we are going to talk about our patrol K9s, and next month, we will talk more about our therapy K9s.

A K9 officer's responsibilities are those of a general police officer, except that they are carried out with a police dog. Police dogs may accompany their human partners on traffic stops, responding to assistance calls or emergencies, apprehending suspects, and acting as a representative of the police force in public engagements. A K9 officer's responsibilities go beyond shift hours. A police dog is the officer's partner at home and at work. The K9 handler, and his or her family, must be prepared to care for the police dog, including ensuring the dog has enough exercise, is cared for if the family goes on vacation, and has everything he needs to live a long and healthy life. A police dog typically becomes one of the family, forming a bond with family members. We asked our K9 handlers for the top questions they get from people, and here are the answers.

Q: Have you trained your dog from a puppy?

A: No, we utilize a kennel in central Indiana that specializes in K9's for police and military use. Most of our dogs receive their initial training overseas. The dogs are selected by the kennel and then brought to the United States. The dogs receive three weeks of drug or explosive odor imprinting before being selected by a handler. The handler and K9 train for six weeks (dual purpose) or three weeks (single purpose) together at the kennel in Indiana before returning to work.

Q: Does your K9 live with you?

A: K9 Rio/Officer Kurtzhals: Yes. We are together 24/7 and she has an outdoor kennel with concrete pad and Igloo-style dog house. There is a dog door leading inside the building that she can use to go into a kennel to stay out of the elements if she chooses to. During cold weather, Rio is allowed to cheat and stay inside the house. Many working dogs aren't afforded this luxury. K9 Max/Ofc Peterson: Yes, Max lives at home with me and he's fine in the house with my other dogs and people in general. Max is an exceptionally social working police dog.



K9 Rio, photo by Ace K9, distributor of our heat sensing systems for the squad cars.

Department Spotlight

K-9's

Q: Is your K9 a German Shepherd, and how old is he?

A: K9 Zanto is a German Shepherd, and is 9 this year. K9 Rio is a Chocolate Lab and is 5 this year. K9s Max and Astor are Belgian Malinois and will be 2 this year.

Q: What can your K9 do to help the officers?

A: K9s Zanto, Max and Astor are all multi-purpose dogs, which means they can sniff for drugs, as well as follow a scent for suspect apprehension. They are also bite trained, which means that when they find the suspect they are trailing, they can be commanded to bite the suspect and hang on, allowing officers to get control of the suspect. K9 Rio is a single purpose dog, which means she is only trained to smell drugs, although she can also track humans. She just is not bite trained for the apprehension at the end of the trail.

Q: How do you know when your dog smells drugs?

A: During training, the handler learns to "read" their dog and looks for changes in behavior that is not normal for their dog. Just like any relationship, as time passes, you learn more about your partner and their normal behaviors. The handler will watch their K9's body language and listen for changes in breathing patterns while they are conducting a search. Our kennel trains passive alert dogs which means that when our dogs smell the odor of drugs, they are trained to get as close as possible to the source of the odor and then go into the sit position. This is called a "final alert".

Q: How do your dogs track a suspect?

A: There are different types of tracking and trailing skills a K9 can have. Our K9s are ground disturbance trained. This is not the anecdotal bloodhound, "sniff an article of clothing & off they go" event. They are not even typically following a specific person's scent; they are following an environmental scent. When a person walks, their footsteps trample things underfoot, such as plants, bugs, mud and soil. These things change scent, and each footprint releases a stronger odor than the last. The dogs are trained to follow these changed odors as they get stronger. These scents last longer than the actual scent of a person in the air. Our K9s have followed scents in excess of 750 yards (7 football fields long!)



K9 Max during bite training



K9 Astor

Department Spotlight

K-9's

Q: Do all your K9s wear bullet proof vests?

A: Yes, all our patrol K9s receive a bullet and stab proof vest, as well as a K9 first aid kit from Wisconsin Vest-A-Dog (www.wivestadog.org.) The vests also minimize blunt force trauma injuries. A vest is good for 5 years, after which they need to be replaced. This organization vests all the K9 units in the state of Wisconsin.

Q: Are the dogs safe while riding around in your squad car?

A: The police department does everything possible to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for our K9 partners. All of our squad cars are outfitted with heat sensors that detect an unacceptable level of heat on the interior of the car. When this happens, an alert is sent to a body-worn pager. The lights and siren are activated, the rear windows are lowered automatically and a large exhaust fan is activated to flush the hot air from the car to the outside. We also have specialized kennels fitted into the squad cars which are bolted to their frames. I cannot speak for the other K-9 handlers but Rio has a thick, comfy fleece dog bed to lay on when she wants. She also gets bones to keep her busy while I am out of the car.

Q: What is the expectation for a K9's career duration?

A: Dual purpose dogs tend to retire at about 10-12 years old. The decision for a K9 to retire is made between the police department and the veterinarian. Once it is determined by the veterinarian that the K-9 is deteriorating physically, the decision is made to retire the dog.

Q: What happens to a K9 once they are retired?

A: K9 Zander/Lt Lopes Serrao: Zander was officially the property of the City of Wausau. When he retired, I was given the option to adopt him and keep him as a household pet, which I obviously did. He has been part of my life for 8 years now. He is living a normal pet life, and even more spoiled now and gets to lay on my recliner while I'm at work. When he sees me putting on my uniform he gets excited and wants to go with. He gets upset when I leave without him, belting out some loud barks in protest. He then moves on to playing with our miniature dachshund.



K9 Zanto in his new vest



K9 Zander, Retired