



UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BEHIND THE STAR

SHERIFF MALCUM J. "JAMIE" PATTON



Meet the Sheriff's Office Canine - "Zeus"

In November 2018, the Union County Sheriff's Office welcomed canine deputy "Zeus" into its ranks. Zeus is a male German Shepherd who was born in the Czech Republic on April 13, 2017. Zeus is assigned to handler Deputy Jake Matejko. They are certified as a canine team by the Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission and the North American Police Work Dog Association. Once certified, Zeus made an immediate impact in our community through his involvement in numerous drug related arrests, criminal apprehensions, and through public appearances and demonstrations. Zeus is trained to assist the Sheriff's Office with tracking, article searches, criminal apprehension, and drug detection. Zeus is the sixth canine to serve at the Sheriff's Office.

Dogs have assisted the military and law enforcement for many years. In ancient times, dogs were used by the Roman Empire for hunting and security. It has only within the last 150 years or so that law enforcement agencies started to train dogs for policework. Nearly any dog breed can be trained to be a police dog, but breeds such as German Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, and Retrievers are by far the most common. These breeds are favored because they are energetic, highly intelligent, easily trained, and very obedient.

Police dogs can be trained to perform specific tasks. Because their sense of smell is so powerful, thousands of times more powerful than the human ability to smell, dogs can be trained to sniff out explosives, track missing people, find evidence of drugs or weapons, and to help catch criminals. Some dogs are even trained to do all of these jobs. These dogs are called general purpose dogs and are how most police dogs are trained today. Canine Zeus is a general purpose dog.

Zeus and Deputy Matejko participate in ongoing daily, weekly, and monthly training. Some training days they practice finding drugs, other days they spend time finding someone who is lost in the woods, and some days they practice bite work. All of this training helps Zeus stay sharp and the canine team prepared for whatever task they may be needed for.

When on duty, Zeus rides with Deputy Matejko on patrol in a specially equipped cruiser. When off duty, Zeus resides with Deputy Matejko and is on call twenty fours a day, seven days a week. Zeus is a dog and loves to play outside, chase tennis balls, and get scratched behind his ears. However, he is also a law enforcement canine and a resource used by the Sheriff's Office to help us accomplish our mission of keeping Union County a safe and secure place to live.