



Wisconsin Law Enforcement Canine Handler Association

P.O. Box 424 McFarland, WI 53658

www.wlecha.org

AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Please complete this form and submit with your nomination letter to:

Franklin Police Department
Sgt. Curtis Goens
9455 W. Loomis Road
Franklin, WI 53132
cgoens@franklinwi.gov

Handler Name: OFFICER JOHN PARKER

K-9 Name: DRAGO

Agency: FITCHBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

Category (Please circle one per form)

Handler of the Year - Rookie Handler of the Year - Meritorious Apprehension - Meritorious Article Find
Meritorious Track with Apprehension - Meritorious Track - Meritorious Narcotics Find

Nominator: EDWARD HARTWICK

Title: SERGEANT

Agency: FITCHBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

Phone: 608-270-4362

E-Mail Address: edward.hartwick@fitchburgwi.gov

Hours of Work: 3p-11p

Membership must be current to win an award

All nominations must be postmarked or submitted by e-mail by August 15th to be accepted

Canine teams may be submitted for multiple awards. Please submit separate nominations for each category.



Thomas A. Blatter | Chief of Police
5520 Lacy Road, Fitchburg, Wisconsin 53711
Ph: 608.270.4300 | Fx: 608.270.4349 | fitchburgwi.gov

August 14, 2017

To: WLECHA Awards Committee

I would like to nominate Officer John Parker and his canine partner Drago for the Rookie Handler of the Year Award. In less than eight months Officer Parker has gone from researching the best canine vendor and assisting in fundraising to handling a high performing canine that already has a couple of major deployments under his belt.

In January of 2016, our first canine, Chase, retired after many years of faithful service to the department. The department had transitioned to a new K9 Unit supervisor and had decided to fully evaluate all available options for their next canine rather than immediately filling the vacancy.

Nearly a year later, a process began for the next canine handler and Officer Parker was thoroughly prepared for the process and position, bringing several years of volunteer decoy experience with him. After his selection as handler, Officer Parker took on the task of researching reputable vendors and interviewing handlers across the state about their experiences with vendors. Officer Parker spent a great deal of time consulting with veteran handlers to gain insight regarding the position and in selecting a dog. During this time Officer Parker also assisted in planning the fundraising efforts necessary to raise the \$27,000 for the acquisition of a new canine and new equipment.

Following the selection of a vendor, Officer Parker traveled on his own to the kennels in Pennsylvania to evaluate and select his dog. Officer Parker met K9 Drago and knew he was the dog he wanted as his partner. In April, Officer Parker returned to the kennel to complete six weeks of training.

Officer Parker and K9 Drago began their watch together this May and have already made a major impact in the community. The duo has only worked together on patrol forty-four days but they have already logged forty-one deployments. Seventeen of the deployments have assisted other agencies (five separate).

The following are some of the examples of Officer Parker and Drago's excellent work:

Detection – Of his 24 detection deployments, Officer Parker and K9 Drago's work has led to the discovery of **two firearms** in a vehicle that led to felony charges.

Patrol – One of Officer Parker and Drago's tracks/article searches led to the discovery of a glove that was discarded by an armed robbery suspect following the robbery of a business.



Thomas A. Blatter | Chief of Police
5520 Lacy Road, Fitchburg, Wisconsin 53711
Ph: 608.270.4300 | Fx: 608.270.4349 | fitchburgwi.gov

Additionally, Officer Parker and Drago conducted an article search and located **49.7 grams of crack cocaine** in a marsh filled with four to eight feet tall grass.

Training – Officer Parker has dedicated a great deal of time to training in order to improve himself and Drago. Shortly after returning from his initial training Officer Parker sought out the assistance of senior K9 handlers and instructors in the area in order to develop a training plan for hard surface tracking. Officer Parker has also reached out to other area and regional K9 units that our department has not traditionally trained with in order to build new partnerships and learn new skills. Just as importantly, Officer Parker also developed a training curriculum for officers at our department in order for everyone to stay safe while working with a K9 and in order to maximize the K9 Unit's effectiveness.

Community Relations – One of the most important functions our department identified for our K9 Unit was community outreach and relations. Officer Parker and Drago have certainly excelled in this category as well. Almost immediately after returning from basic training, Officer Parker and Drago appeared at a fundraiser for canine cancer. The event drew over 1,000 participants and 700 dogs. Since then the team has appeared at 10 other community events and has made numerous impromptu appearances. Officer Parker and Drago are extremely popular with all ages and Drago is loved by all that meet him. Officer Parker goes above and beyond to make himself available to participate in these community events and has already begun to plan his own events and outreach efforts.

Thanks to Officer Parker and Drago we have exceeded our initial fundraising goal by several thousand dollars.

As their supervisor, Officer Parker and Drago have not only met my expectations but they have significantly exceeded them. They have already played a role in making our community a safer place, keeping criminals off the street, keeping officers safe and they have become our unofficial ambassadors. For their excellent work together in little over four months, please nominate Officer Parker and Drago for Rookie Handler of the Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sgt. Edward Hartwick'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'S' at the beginning.

Sgt. Edward Hartwick