

City of Kawartha Lakes Police Service
Canine Unit: Police Constable Mike Stratford #54
Police Service Dog "Strike"

2010 YEAR END REPORT

The end of 2010 brought to a close the sixth full year that this canine team has been operational. The unit's calls for service have been steady over the last couple of years. Calls for service decreased slightly in 2010. That in part is due to the fact the handler was off for the final six weeks of the year due to a work related injury and medical treatment. The canine unit was inactive for that time period. Other canine units covering our area were utilized seven times in that time period. Those stats will be noted in this report. I believe the reputation of the canine unit may have become a deterrent. Police Service Dog Strike is a "**General Patrol Duty**" canine, also cross trained in narcotics detection. The canine has become a valuable tool for the police service and the community.

CANINE CALLS FOR SERVICE:	107
Community Service Details:	12
(Other Canine Units)	<u>07</u>
TOTAL CALLS FOR CANINE:	126

HIGHLIGHTS:

In 2010 the unit was highlighted in an International Police K9 magazine for its contribution and successes which have occurred over the past five years. It was an honor for our unit, Police Service and Community. Other than larger services such as the Toronto Police Service and the R.C.M.P. we are the only other Canadian Police Service to be highlighted.

Police Service Dog "Strike" surpassed the one million dollar mark for value of illegal narcotics recovered in the last six years. In a 2010 survey by our service within our community the main concern for our citizens was drugs and its related crimes. The canine unit remains a front line deterrent in the fight against illegal drugs within our community. Strike has been able to locate narcotics destined for our streets in a number of hidden compartments both within vehicles and residences. Such areas include cocaine hidden in a gas tank, a large quantity of crack cocaine hidden in a false compartment of a vehicle and heroine hidden in a false floor of a residence. Without the canine, these narcotics would never have been located and distributed onto our streets.

In 2010 the Canine Unit responded to six calls in relation to armed robberies, four of those were at local convenience stores and two in regards to residences. Out of the six calls, the canine unit in response was instrumental in locating the suspects or evidence in five out of the six calls. In all five instances either the suspect or evidence was located that led to the identity of the suspect which led to a subsequent arrest.

Strike continues to be a favorite within our community and in 2010 the unit gave a dozen community service presentations, for both young and old members of our community.

Tracking: 38

The canine was utilized thirty eight times in the year for tracking purposes. This includes where the canine is actively searching for a suspect of a crime and can be utilized both on and off line. Primarily the calls are for the tracking of criminals, either fleeing from a scene or vehicle. Out of the thirty eight times the canine was deployed, eighteen were successful. A success is measured when the canine locates the person he is tracking, or if evidence, information or property is located along the track or search that leads to the identity of the suspect, which leads to criminal charges.

NARCOTICS DETECTION: 34

On thirty four- occasions the canine was called upon to search for narcotics. This includes searches of the Central East Correctional Center, as well as vehicles other conveyances and property searches. The team works closely with uniform officers and the drug unit at the street level, assisting officers in searches of vehicles and property in the ongoing effort to decrease the drug activity within our community. Since January 2005 the canine has assisted in the seizure of over one million dollars worth of illegal narcotics. The unit has been called upon to assist the O.P.P., Peterborough Lakefield Community Police Service, the Niagara Regional Police Service and other Federal Agencies in both Canada and the United States.

SEARCH WARRANTS: 14

The canine is a valuable tool during the execution of search warrants; the use is two-fold. The canine can be used on the perimeter or on entry of the target location to neutralize any suspects attempting to escape from officers. The canine provides valuable officer-safety support when utilized inside or outside of the entry location while occupants can be taken into custody. Primarily however, the canine is used for his ability for narcotics detection. The canine is trained in the detection of a wide variety of narcotic odor's and is a valuable tool in pin-pointing locations where narcotics may be hidden and inaccessible by searching officers.

BUILDING SEARCHES: 10

Often police officers respond to alarms at various locations, including schools, businesses and large factories or retail stores. At times officers responding locate an insecure door or window that may indicate that a perpetrator may still be inside. This can be one of the most dangerous calls for a police officer, because they have to go into a location that is dark and open, not knowing what awaits them around the corner. The canine is a valuable tool in this search, as officers can wait in a secure location while the canine searches for anyone inside. If the canine locates someone, he is trained to bark (if the suspect is not threatening) or engage and hold the suspect if he is aggressive or armed giving officers time to close in and safely arrest the suspect. The use of the canine in these situations is valuable to officer safety. As well, the canine is able to search the building much more quickly decreasing the amount of time it would take for 3 or 4 officers to search the same building. The unit also conducts periodic searches of the Provincial Court Building in an effort to maintain a secure and safe environment.

OPEN SEARCH/RESCUE: 3

The canine is also trained not to just track or locate criminals, but to also to search for lost or missing people. He is trained both on and off line in search and rescue situations. The canine can cover a large area in less time it would take ground officers. If the lost person is partially buried in snow or in thick bush their scent will carry out to the canine, where he is trained to alert to the presence of the human odor. Although the person may not be visible, the canine can signal to the handler the area of where the person is. The canine was utilized in this capacity on two separate occasions within our policing jurisdiction for the search of two elderly people suffering from Alzheimer's who had gone missing from assisted living facilities. Our canine unit was used to assist the Peterborough Lakefield Community Police Service in the search for a lost child.

EVIDENCE DETECTION: 8

The canine is also trained in searching for evidence. The canine can locate evidence such as a weapon, clothing or property that may lead to the identification of a suspect in a crime or a missing person. The canine is a valuable tool in these investigations. The canine was utilized on eight occasions for this specific task. In one instance the canine located stolen property from a number of break and enters into residences and vehicles.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: 12

The police service canine has become an integral part of the police service in its community service initiatives. The canine unit works closely with the community services division and actively participates in interactive presentations throughout our community. Strike has become an ongoing interactive tool within the local schools in an effort to educate students about drug use and other influences in their lives. The unit also visits with Community Care, the Boys and Girls Club, Adult Protective Services, the Alzheimer's Society, Scouts, Beavers and other community groups. The canine has been a link to these organizations and our police service, to people who might not otherwise see or interact with police. Many of the clients involved in these organizations are vulnerable in our community. Strike has become a community favorite with numerous organizations requesting a canine demonstration. We work hard to full every request.

RESULTS

To date, the canine unit has located over one million dollars worth of narcotics out of our schools and off our streets. The canine has apprehended armed robbery suspects, and other criminals who prey on our citizens. The canine unit has become an integral part of the police service and the community. This valuable resource has made an impact within the City of Kawartha Lakes to make it a safer place to live, work and play. This year of 2011 will be the last year for Police Service Dog "Strike" as he will be soon turning nine years old. A new handler and canine have been selected to commence their training in the spring of 2011. I have no doubt that with the continued support from our Police Service and the Community the new Canine Unit will continue to serve the City of Kawartha Lakes well.

