

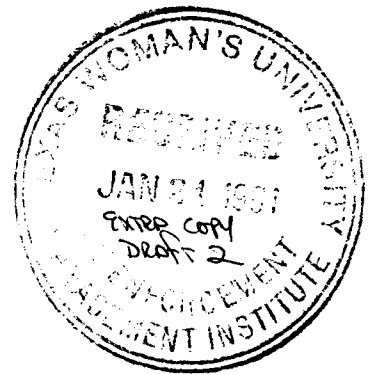
Law Enforcement Management Institute

A Managerial Plan For A Canine Unit In Marshall, Texas

A Learning Contract
Submitted In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
Module II

by

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#89

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Introduction

Law-enforcement officers are faced daily with dangers and challenges which are inherently unique to their field. The challenges are great and sometimes seem insurmountable. Fortunately, there are aids available for the officers to help meet the challenges and dangers. One such aid is the implementation of a canine unit within a law-enforcement agency. A well trained canine and handler team can prove to be invaluable.

The examination of surrounding police department canine units shows the advantage of incorporating such a unit. The Longview, Texas patrol canine team has assisted in six felony arrests and has been involved in two unassisted felony arrests in the last six months. With the use of the canine, the arrests were made more quickly and reduced the danger for the officers.¹ In Harrison County, there was a young boy missing from home for several hours. The officers, alone, were unable to locate the boy. The canine team was called in and the boy was located under a house.² Texarkana, Texas has added a second canine team to the department. In less than a year the canine team was utilized in several felony arrests and the recovery of several thousand dollars in stolen property. The canine was also used when an elderly woman walked away from a nursing home and could not be located. Four officers

searched for approximately four hours before calling in the canine unit. Once the team arrived on the scene, it took only twenty minutes to locate the woman who had fallen down into a ravine underneath a brush pile.³

When not answering calls for service, the police K-9 is primarily utilized for physical security checks of commercial, industrial, and construction sites. Other specific functions that K-9's perform are: building searches, field searches, trackings, officer protection, suspect apprehension, evidence recovery, crowd control, and situation security. The utilization of a K-9 team increases the level of success in apprehending suspects and recovering property while it decreases the level of hazard for officers in search situations. The K-9's enhanced sensory capabilities make the detection of missing persons much quicker and safer, thus reducing the potential for injury to officers.

The Canine

The incorporation of a K-9 Unit is a novel idea for some police departments who have little or no experience in this area. Thus, when selecting a patrol dog, the Marshall Police Department must be careful to look for certain qualities in the animal. There are several breeds that can be trained to function in a patrol/search capacity. However, the German Shepherd,

with its strength, courage, and aggressiveness, would best serve the needs of the Marshall Police Department. This dog has the ability to perform all of the appropriate functions of a police canine. ⁴

In selecting a canine, the Marshall Police Department will require the dog to be no younger than one year nor older than three years of age. The dog must stand a minimum of twenty-four inches high at the shoulder and weigh at least sixty pounds. Along with the physical requirements, there must be a specific minimum acceptable standard of performance for the canine. The standard should include the following:

1. The dog must obediently respond to commands.
2. The canine must be able to search buildings and large areas to indicate the presence of unauthorized persons.
3. The police dog must be able to track a fleeing criminal or follow the trail of lost children.
4. The canine must be able to search designated areas for lost or discarded evidence.
5. On command, the canine must be able to apprehend a fleeing felon while protecting its handler from physical attack. ⁵

Handler Requirements

Selecting a qualified canine handler is equally as important as choosing the right dog. The department must choose an officer that is genuinely interested in the program and who will stay with it over a period of years. There are specific requirements for an officer

desiring assignment in the canine unit. These are the following:

1. The officer must have completed at least one full year of patrol duty.
2. The officer must own a home with sufficient yard space.
3. The officer must be in good physical condition, with weight proportional to height. ⁶

If the officer meets the basic requirements, then he will go before an oral interview board to be evaluated. The officer's family would also be interviewed to determine whether or not having the canine in the home would cause conflict. Before the officer accepts the assignment, he must know the standard operating procedures; thus he would decide if he would have any problems meeting the requirements.

Training

When the police department receives the canine, it must be given a rigorous training course. The dog must be trained in these areas:

1. Obedience
2. Agility
3. Building searches
4. Area and open field searches
5. Attack
 - A. Handler protection
 - B. Under gunfire conditions
 - C. Inside buildings and vehicles
 - D. Recall in mid-attack
6. Article search
7. Tracking ⁷

The trainer will then leave the canine with the handler for four weeks so the handler and the canine

can become familiar with each other. During this time, the handler will not train or use the canine in the course of his/her job. The trainer will then return to train the handler and canine as a team. After two or three weeks, the canine unit will be ready to work. The team must train twice a week to maintain a proper working alliance between canine and handler.

Liability

Along with the need for sufficient training comes the question of insurance. Liability is one of the main departmental concerns when placing a canine team on the streets for duty. Police canines are a legitimate, non-lethal tool which may be employed when force must be used in making apprehensions of resisting suspects. The courts have ruled in favor of the canine unit with the stipulation that both the handler and the canine be well trained and work under a written policy. The team should be evaluated on a regular basis with the evaluation documents kept current. Unit training, as well as unit evaluation, must be continuous.

Cost

It goes without saying that there is a cost factor involved when implementing a K-9 Unit. The canine budget request is a new item incorporated into a budget request. Accordingly, the following factors

must be addressed in the request to set the stage for proper support and effectiveness of the unit within the department (see Appendix I).

1. Cost and training
2. Equipment
3. Personnel salary
4. Up-keep and maintenance
5. Support equipment (i.e. vehicle)

A well trained canine can be of great value to a police department. This unit would be utilized in the apprehension of suspects from buildings, thus reducing some of the inherent dangers to officers who would normally perform that task. The canine would reduce man-hours used in the search of missing persons, building searches, and fleeing suspects. This is just one example of the important role a canine unit can provide a police department. The total cost of purchasing and training the dog would be approximately \$7,000.00. This figure also reflects the training cost of the handler as well. ⁸

Certain equipment is necessary to maintain a canine unit. To house the canine, a concrete slab and pen must be provided at a cost of approximately \$380.00. Other miscellaneous items (i.e. leashes and collars) would cost about \$150.00.⁹ To maintain an permanent training program for the canine, a bite-suit is required for the protection of the handler's assistant. The training program is a very important part of the canine unit and the bite-suit is used to

keep the assistant from being inadvertently injured by the canine. The cost of a quality bite suit is about \$900.00.¹⁰ The physical maintainance of the canine is very important. The canine must be healthy and in top physical condition. An annual physical (projected cost of about \$85.00) is necessary. Other medical attention such as vaccinations and various protective injections are required to maintain the dog's health. The annual cost of the food and medical care would be approximately \$1800.00. For this program to be successful, the handler as well as the canine must be properly trained. The cost of training the handler will be included in the cost of training the canine. A patrolman's first training class would be used to fill the position of handler. The annual salary for this position is \$19,855.68. The cost of the fringe benefits for this officer classification is \$5,382.08¹²

The officer would need a special vehicle in which to transport himself and his canine. This vehicle would be drawn from the existing fleet within the department. The annual maintenance, oil and gas, based on a fleet average would be \$2,632.00.¹³

Liability insurance will be needed to protect the city in the event of law-suits. Though suits are rarely filed against the canine units - and those which are filed are rarely substantiated - a canine unit

cannot afford to operate without liability insurance. The annual cost for the insurance on the canine is normally about \$500.00.¹⁴ The following appendix is a budget outline that would appear line-by-line, if the Marshall Police Department were to implement a K-9 Unit.

Recommendation

Based on this information it seems evident that implementation of a patrol canine unit would enhance police productivity in Marshall. Therefore, it is recommended that the City of Marshall consider the purchase of a police canine. The canine would add to officer protection in building searches, crowd control, and suspect apprehension. The reduction in man-hours would be evident in tracking, field searches, evidence recoveries, and building searches. In addition to saving man-hours, the canine is an effective law enforcement tool. It is further recommended that the City of Marshall purchase a German shepherd of German import. They are known for their characteristic traits and reliability in police work. After the purchase of the canine, and the subsequent selection of a handler, the team must receive the best possible training. The City of Marshall Police Department must then establish a department policy before releasing the unit to the streets.

APPENDIX I

BUDGET OUTLINE

CANINE UNIT 702

Account No.

702-100	Personnel Services	
702-101	Salaries	19855.68
702-102	Fringe Benefits	5382.08
	Personnel Services Sub-Total	25237.76
702-200	Contractual	
702-201	Training and Canine	7000.00
702-202	Insurance	500.00
702-203	Vehicle Maintenance	2632.00
702-204	Medical	85.00
	Contractual Sub-Total	10217.00
702-300	Commodities	
702-301	Up-Keep and Maintenance	1800.00
	Commodities Sub-Total	1800.00
702-400	Capital Outlay	
702-401	Pen and Slab	380.00
702-402	Equipment	150.00
702-403	Bite-suit	900.00
	Capital Outlay Sub-Total	1430.00
	Program Total	38684.76

ENDNOTES

¹Mike Harrod, interview by author, Longview, Texas, 06 June 1990.

²Ricky Sawyer, interview by author, Harrison County, 14 June 1990.

³Joe Sarata, interview by author, Texarkana, Texas, 20 February 1990.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ed Nicks, interview by author, Midland, Texas, 30 January 1990.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Oscar Hall, interview by author, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 20 February 1990.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Charles Blalock and Gary Beavers, interview by author, Marshall, Texas, 26 February 1990.

¹⁰Robert Hooper, interview by author, Austin, Texas, 20 February 1990.

¹¹Paul Anderson, interview by author, Marshall, Texas, 26 February 1990.

¹²Captain W. Agent, interview by author, Marshall, Texas, 29 August 1990.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.