

Michigan State Police Canine Memorial
Canine Line of Duty Deaths

Aiko



September 9, 1994 - October 5, 1998

At two years of age, Aiko, a Netherlands-born German Shepherd, began training in the fall of 1996 with Tpr. Joel Service at the Flint Post. After graduating from Basic Canine School in December 1996, Canine Aiko was certified in tracking, building search, evidence search, area search, controlled aggression, obedience, and narcotics detection.

On October 5, 1998, shortly after Trooper Service and Aiko started their afternoon shift, officers from Genesee Township announced that they had an armed robbery suspect flee on foot from a mobile home as they attempted to make an arrest. Trooper Service and Aiko responded along with Tpr. David Stokes as backup.

After arriving, Trooper Service and Aiko attempted to pick up a track but were unsuccessful. They began searching the surrounding area in hopes of picking up the suspect's scent. While searching a large area of trees and overgrown brush, Aiko located the suspect lying on his back nearly out of sight. The suspect was armed with a pistol and shot Aiko once in the neck. The suspect got to his feet and ran out of the woods firing at the troopers. Trooper Stokes returned fire wounding the suspect who was subsequently taken into custody.

After being shot, Aiko ran back to Trooper Service, who attempted to save him. Unfortunately, the bullet had caused severe internal injuries and Aiko died a minute later.

The suspect was eventually tried and convicted of multiple crimes related to this incident. He was sentenced to prison where he remains today.

Aiko was the first MSP canine to die in the line of duty.

Bane



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August 19, 2006 - November 2010

Bane, a German Shepherd born in 2006, joined the MSP in June 2008 and went through training with Tpr. Jamie Bullis from the Alpena Post. Canine Bane was certified in tracking, building search, evidence search, area search, controlled aggression, obedience, and narcotics detection.

In November 2010, Trooper Bullis and Bane were assisting with a search for the remains of an Alzheimer's patient who had walked away from his home three months earlier. A neighbor of the missing individual was out hunting and found a shirt believed to belong to the victim. While Bane and Trooper Bullis were searching a heavily wooded swamp, Bane was about fifteen yards in front of Trooper Bullis and out of sight, so Trooper Bullis called him back. Trooper Bullis could see Bane running towards him when Bane ran through a small gap in the woods. As Bane was running, a deer was startled and ran through the same gap. It is believed that when the deer brushed up against Bane, Bane gave chase and was gone. Trooper Bullis searched for Bane that entire night and the next day. Many others helped in the search for the next two weeks, but without success.

Approximately one year later, an informant came forward and provided the name of a suspect who he claimed shot and killed Bane within hours of Bane going missing. The informant said he and the suspect were deer hunting and saw a set of eyes in a field approximately one mile from where Bane and Trooper Bullis had been. They supposedly shot Bane and after walking up to him, saw a leash on him and left him there. When they learned about a missing MSP canine the next day, the suspects went back to the location, took Bane and buried him. Further investigation failed to yield enough evidence to bring criminal charges.

Due to this tragedy, the MSP purchased GPS trackers for all of its canines. The GPS is secured to the dog and can be followed from a phone or computer.

Bane was the second MSP canine to die in the line of duty.

Eli



August 9, 2009 - June 28, 2016

Eli was a German Shepard donated to the MSP Canine Unit by a family in Wayne County, Michigan. In June 2011, Canine Eli was assigned to Tpr. Steven Escott from the Bridgeport Post and together they completed training with the MSP Canine Unit. Eli was certified in accelerant detection.

Trooper Escott and Eli completed 622 accelerant searches at various fire scenes. They assisted investigators with determining the causes and origins of fires, resulting in uncovering millions of dollars of insurance fraud. Insurance claims were denied and criminals prosecuted.

On June 27, 2016, Trooper Escott and Eli were assigned to a commercial building fire at a laundry and dry-cleaning business. After the search, it was determined the commercial business had several areas

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with hazardous chemicals at the fire scene. The following morning, sixteen hours after the search, Eli was found dead in his kennel. Eli's death was the result of chemicals inhaled during the search at the laundry and dry-cleaning business.

Eli was the third MSP canine to die in the line of duty.

Max



October 2, 2010 - June 15, 2018

Maximus (Max), a German Shepherd born in 2010, began training in the spring of 2012 with Tpr. Harold Terry at the Houghton Lake Post. Canine Max graduated from basic canine school and was certified in tracking, building search, evidence search, area search, controlled aggression, obedience, and narcotics detection.

Trooper Terry and Max worked together for six years during which time they had many successes with finding narcotics, tracking down criminals, and locating missing persons. In March 2016, Max was reassigned to Tpr. Jim King at the Jackson Post when Trooper Terry was promoted to sergeant at the Houghton Lake Post.

Trooper King and Max worked together until the fateful day of June 15, 2018, when canine assistance was requested to track a suspect who had rammed a Hillsdale Police Department patrol vehicle and then fled on foot.

The team arrived on the scene and Trooper King put Max's tracking harness on as he had done many times before. The command to track was given and Max's nose went to the ground. At that moment, Trooper King heard a yelp and observed Max laying on the ground. Trooper King could not locate a pulse and did not see Max breathing. It was subsequently determined that Max had suffered a fatal heart attack and died on the scene. Unfortunately, there were no lifesaving measures that would have saved Max.

Max was the fourth MSP canine to die in the line of duty.

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Beck



April 19, 2009 - June 20, 2018

Canine Beck was a German Shepard that completed the MSP canine training school with Tpr. Steven Escott from the Bridgeport Post on October 29, 2010. Beck was certified in tracking, explosive detection, building searches, and property searches.

Along with the MSP, Beck also assisted the United States Secret Service and United States Capital Police and performed explosive sweeps for dignitaries visiting the state of Michigan. Beck was also very helpful to county and municipal police agencies. One such example was when Beck was assisting the Saginaw Violent Crime Task Force with a homicide investigation when he located a rifle inside the wall of a garage. The weapon was used in the homicide and helped to develop a suspect, who was then arrested and convicted of murder.

On June 20, 2018, after completing a successful canine assignment with Trooper Escott, Beck collapsed in the back of the MSP patrol vehicle and died. It was determined that he died from hemangiosarcoma cardiac arrest.

Beck was the fifth MSP canine to die in the line of duty.

Rex



May 18, 2014 - July 25, 2021

Canine Rex was a German Shepherd certified in narcotics detection, tracking, and apprehension. At two years of age, Rex was trained by Tpr. David Bellestri during the 51st MSP Basic Canine School in 2017. Rex served at the Metro South Post from 2017 until his end of watch in July 2021. Rex was a natural tracking dog and excelled in locating firearms during article searches and narcotics during detection work. Rex was responsible for locating countless wanted felons, firearms, and hundreds of pounds of narcotics.

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On the morning of July 25, 2021, Trooper Bellestri and Rex were sitting in their patrol vehicle assisting with a freeway closure due to flooding. While blocking traffic, their patrol vehicle was struck by a drunk driver. The crash resulted in significant damage to their patrol vehicle as well as the at-fault vehicle. After regaining consciousness, Trooper Bellestri tended to the occupants of the at-fault vehicle that had caught on fire. He pulled the occupants out of the burning vehicle and then tended to Rex who had been critically injured in the crash. Rex and Trooper Bellestri were subsequently transported by fellow troopers to a veterinary hospital, but due to the severity of the injuries Rex sustained during the crash, he was put to rest.

Rex was the sixth MSP canine to die in the line of duty.