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Press Release

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IMMEDIATE

### MTA Police Canine Team Wins Honor as Nation's Best Explosive Detectors

#### *MTA PD Canine Unit Wins Top Honor for Second Time in Three Years*

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today announced that MTA PD Officer Kevin Pimpinelli and his canine partner Mullen were awarded first place in the U.S. Police Canine Association 2011 trials for explosives detection. This is the second time in the past three years that a team from the MTA Police Department's Canine Unit has received this honor.

At the trials, the nation's top human/canine law enforcement teams are tested on the speed and accuracy with which they can locate explosives while adhering to accepted searching practices and procedures. In order to qualify for the national trials, Officer Pimpinelli and Mullen faced 28 other teams from across the region. They faced seven finalists at the national trials, held May 21-25 in Pearl, Mississippi.

Mullen, a six-year-old German shepherd, receives specialized explosives detection training each month at the MTA Police Department's Canine Training Facility in Stormville, N.Y., as well as regular on-the-job training.

"Congratulations to Officer Pimpinelli and Mullen, and the entire Canine Training Unit," said Douglas Zeigler, MTA Director of Security. "Canines are invaluable partners with capabilities that no human or machine can duplicate. This national honor helps to confirm that the efforts we have made since 9/11 to create a strong anti-terror canine force have been effective. But the real confirmation can be seen every day on the front lines, where our canines help to keep our railroad customers and employees safe and secure."

Officer Pimpinelli says his team's success comes from the MTA PD's exacting training regimen, as well as his partner's good natured disposition. "I've been working with him for five years, and right from day one he's had an excellent temperament for a police canine," said Officer Pimpinelli. "I could bring him into a classroom full of kindergarteners and he'd be the gentlest dog you can imagine. And then if I gave the command, he'd instantly be searching for explosives."

MTA Police Officer Nelson Hernandez and his canine partner, Mia, received the top award in 2009. Last year, MTA Police Officer James Anderson and his canine partner, Buck, were the runners up.

The MTA Police Department has the largest explosives-detection canine force in the nation, with 50 canines spread across 5,000 square miles in 14 counties, where they patrol the stations, trains, tracks and yards of the Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad, and Staten Island Railway. The MTA PD's canines are certified by the U.S. Police Canine Association, the New York State Department of Criminal Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

When Mullen is not on duty protecting train travelers, he enjoys playing with dog toys and going on walks with Officer Pimpinelli around the neighborhood in Connecticut where they live. Mullen is named after MTA Police Sgt. John Mullen, who died in the line of duty in January 2007.



MTA Police Officer Kevin Pimpinelli and His Canine Partner, Mullen.  
(Photo by Metropolitan Transportation Authority / Patrick Cashin)

